



# Galedon

## A theran City

*An Earthdawn Campaign Location*

*Derived from the works of: Andrew Ragland*

*Presented by Tableau Infractus Archive*



# GALEDON

## A THERAN CITY

*A Web Book derived from the works of*

**Andrew Ragland**

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**Galedon a Theran City  
A Tableau Infractus Fanzine  
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**Archival Note**

This is a Tableau Infractus PDF library archive. It is produced to highlight works of others and formatted to be an archive should the original source be lost from the internet.

Galedon is a city in the Theran Empire, a trading port and home of intrigue and assassins. This content was written before the Theran Empire source book was released.

**CREDITS**

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# Galedon

## A Theran City

### An Earthdawn Campaign Location

## INTRODUCTION

Earthdawn is what sword and sorcery games were meant to be, high fantasy in the finest tradition. The course of the world can be changed by a few staunch heroes in the right time at the right place. Complex politics allow for intrigue in a grand style. What follows is a detailed description of the Theran City of Galedon. Written as a manuscript for FASA and passed over. The Empire of Thera sourcebook was released after this location was fleshed out. Because it was not included in the Thera source book the author saw fit released it on to the net as a free resource.

With the destruction of Geocities web domain by Yahoo the original home page has been lost. The Reocities group is attempting to save the old Geocities content. For the time being this manuscript is available there.

This is a Campaign location created in the best manner; it maintains no rules for any particular edition of Earthdawn and therefore can be easily used across all the editions.





## A note from Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records:

*Sadly, this shall be the final report filed by Tarliman Joppos. From an account given by his bodyguard, Threndok of the Vorst, Tarliman died in his sleep during his second night on the island of Thera, apparently of natural causes. As a final duty, his guards brought his personal effects, including this record, to the Great Library. As well, they have delivered his ashes, which shall be enshrined in the Hall of Fallen Heroes. Barsaive and the world beyond have lost a scholar of great intellect, a dwarf whose enthusiasm for knowledge inspired those around him. Rest well.*

Tarliman Joppos  
Travelled Scholar of the Eighth Circle  
Chair of City Lore, Hall of Records, Great Library, Kingdom of Throal  
1440 - 1510 Th.

“Through knowledge, all things are possible.”

## DISPATCH FROM TARLIMAN JOPPPOS TO THE HALL OF RECORDS AT THROAL

*Greetings and well wishes. Garlen grant you are feeling better than I am. The moment at hand finds me convalescing from the results of a decision.*

*You may recall that, some months ago, I sent a record from Anghali G'Hosteren, detailing that city. In it, I recounted my interlude with a seller of fortunes, a remarkably perceptive old woman who saw much in my past and apparently in my future. Her words have indeed been prophetic.*

*Following my departure from the trading city, I joined a merchant caravan going to Vivane. We rode through the remnants of the once proud lands of Ustrect and Cara Fahd. I will provide the details of that journey in a*

*separate writing, for it deserves its own treatment apart from this missive. On arriving at Vivane, I decided to make arrangements to travel further in swiftness, as the region around Vivane has been thoroughly detailed already, and I sought new territories. Thus, I made my way to the Theran Quarter, made contact with the Geographical Society and consulted as to air travel.*

*Threndok, one of my Vorst guards, shook his head sadly over my decision to travel by airship to the next large city in the direction of Thera. He proclaimed that my haste would be my undoing, that only by slow and careful steps, making certain of every inch of the way, would I arrive safely at my eventual destination. He recommended that we join a different caravan,*



*traveling under the scarlet banner of the House of Jovidan, a powerful mercantile consortium from Travar. It would be slow, however, and we would spend far too much time in lands already well documented.*

*So I took ship with Latrillo Ventani, an Air Sailor Adept and regular plyer of the southern trade routes. He promised me a swift journey to Galedon, the obvious next step and the last one before Thera itself. From there, he said, I could easily take ship to the Golden Isle. So, the following morning, I and my guards boarded his vessel, he unfurled his sails, hoisted a bright golden banner with a sigil of wings and a sword and we set sail for Galedon.*

*It was then that I recalled the old woman's prophecies. Looking back through my notes, I found her exact words: "The red banner brings safety. The yellow banner brings pain, but with it, knowledge." Well, by then it was far too late to alter the situation, and I would just have to deal with whatever consequences my decision brought.*

*The first few days of the journey were quiet. On the evening of the fifth, however, disaster struck. Out of heavy clouds above us swooped another airship, sky raiders leaping over its sides and dropping unerringly onto our deck. The crew fought valiantly, but were swiftly outnumbered, and outclassed from the very beginning by the well-trained Adepts of the sky raiders. One confronted me, struck the sword from my hands and demanded I open my trunk, which I did. The troll seemed irritated that it was full of*

*scrolls, books and clothing, and not of gold and jewels. Snatching me up by the front of my robes, he pressed his nose to mine.*

*"I am Kalix Bonegrinder of the Iron Claws, Sky Raider and Adept of the Fifth Circle! You will tell me who you are and where your treasure is!"*

*I mustered what calm I could under the circumstances, drawing upon my own Discipline, and replied, "I am Tarliman Joppos, Scholar and Adept of the Seventh Circle, holder of the chair of City Lore at the Hall of Records in Throal. You have seen my treasure. It is knowledge, contained within those books. I have little else to offer."*

*His eyes narrowed. "Scholar from Throal, eh? Well, write this down. Today the Iron Claws took this ship and all its riches. Let the world know that this is our territory, and we exact a price from those who would pass through without our permission. Tell your friends in Throal that Kalix spared your life so you could tell his story."*

*I suppose I must have nodded acquiescence, for by then I couldn't speak. His grip had nearly cut off my wind and I was spending all my effort to continue breathing. He dropped me onto my trunk, then whirled to contend with one of my guards.*

*I lost track of the fight in the process of securing my trunk, for just then the ship lurched to one side, and began dropping rapidly. The next thing I knew, another of my guards heaved the trunk overboard, then seized me and*



*leaped. We fell into the top of a tree, our descent slowed by its foliage and by my guard's occasional grabs at passing branches. As it was, we hit the ground hard, although not so hard as our ship, which crashed a little distance away.*

*My trunk survived the impact reasonably well, picking up a new crack in its side and having to be dug out of the hillside where it struck. On the other hand, I landed badly and suffered a broken arm. One of my guards, Tivok, died fighting the trolls, the other three surviving with various injuries. We dealt with Tivok's remains in the Vorst manner, building a pyre and setting it ablaze, then walking away swiftly. My arm was set by Gotir, a skilled healer as well as a fighter, and he pronounced it good enough until we could seek additional help. Dividing up the contents of the trunk into packs, we set off in search of the nearest inhabitation.*

*We had not long to travel. The next morning, shortly after we had broken camp, we encountered a patrol of soldiers, dressed in Theran uniform. Their leader introduced himself to us as Lenrissian Kalidol, and inquired as to whether we had been on the airship. He apologized profusely for not coming to our aid more swiftly, but the base had only one airship and it had been engaged. Besides that, the conflict had occurred on the border of disputed territory, and he had no wish to cause an incident by trying to assist.*

*Lenrissian ordered his men to cut*

*branches and rig a sort of crude sedan chair for me. Taking our packs and providing some healing potions, he escorted us to his unit's base a half day's journey further. Two of his men he sent further on to recover what they could from the crash site, which happily included my trunk. At the base, a small fort deep in the woods, we were all attended to by the military healer, who reset my arm and made sure I wouldn't lose any use of my hand. He also cleared a developing infection in Threndok's leg, and gave us all herbs to speed our healing. The unit commander, Shantea Mallesin, came to see us and express his sympathies regarding our recent loss. He also made arrangements for our remaining possessions to be recovered from the wreckage of the ship.*

*Far from the haughty imperialists I had expected, my first contacts with Therans were in fact friendly, outgoing, helpful and courteous. Conversely, the Iron Fists, whom I had heard described as the most civilized of troll clans, turned out to be savage fighters and vicious brigands, at least the ones who descended upon us. A most enlightening experience indeed, paid for in pain, as the old fortune-seller predicted.*

*Commander Mallesin arranged for an armed escort to take us further, all the way to Galedon. So here we are, one less than when we set forth. We have found knowledge, at a dear price.*





# ON THE HISTORY OF THE CITY

Some of my colleagues may take exception with the positive light in which I present many aspects of the Theran Empire. I feel that I would be false to my Discipline if I were to slant my writings to cast an unfavorable light on all that I report. While it is true that the Empire as a whole practices the abomination of slavery, many of its citizens do not. Whether or not to hold slaves is a matter of debate within the Empire, and in time the slaveholders may come to realize the error of their ways. In the mean time, it would be unfair of me to describe every Theran as despicable, especially as many of them have been like any other Name-giver: people residing under a government that they may or may not agree with, but owing their loyalty to it nonetheless.

I ask that this report be received in the same manner that it is writ: as an attempt to report what I have found fairly and impartially, without interjecting the opinions of the writer unnecessarily into the facts of the matter.

## Founding and Early Days

Galedon dates back to the early days of the Theran Empire. Founded originally as a way station for transport of materials to the School of Shadows during its initial expansion, a settlement grew up around the warehouses and caravanserais. As the School evolved into Thera, Galedon rose from a storage depot to a city based on mercantile interests. These roots in trade, negotiation and competition among Houses shaped the culture of the city for centuries to come.

As senior members of the trading Houses moved to the city, they demanded more amenities. A library was built, never to rival the Eternal Library but sufficient for the populace. An amphitheatre was excavated, there being no natural depressions sufficient for such. Over the years, improvements were made -- a roof added over the more expensive seats, a shell erected behind the stage to enhance the sound. Eventually, slaves were brought in and an arena was built for lower forms of entertainment: staged combats between champions of rival Houses or between slaves.

As the city grew older, and its ruling class continued to be prosperous, intrigue and decadence settled in like two halves of the

same jaded coin. Where in the early days Houses competed honestly and openly against one another, now they plotted and spied. Pleasures grew more opulent, more involved, more expensive in terms of resources and side effects. Then came the Scourge.

## Concerning the Scourge

Being a Theran city, Galedon had no trouble at all acquiring the citadel method. Great stores of True elements were amassed, some of the Houses turning great profits and others being ruthlessly crushed in the scramble for survival. When the Horrors began to manifest in serious numbers, the shield went up and the city settled in for the next four centuries.

During the time of the Enclosure, as the natives refer to it, what had been a means of competition became a pastime. Bored nobles, deprived of their normal outlets, began complex plots against one another for lack of anything else to do. Intrigue became a way of passing the time, and after many years an ingrained habit. According to the rumors, this is when assassination became a profession. I have been unable to verify the existence of assassins in Galedon, but tales of



them are rife. See the section entitled *On the Rumors of Assassins*, further on in the record.

## Galedon after the Scourge

The governor ordered the shield brought down after being signaled from Thera that the Scourge was over. I do know that there was some sort of arcane communications device used to pass this message into the citadel, through the magical defenses, but its nature is a well kept secret. Whether such devices are still in use throughout the Empire is a matter for speculation. At any rate, when the citadel was opened, the Houses immediately scrambled to resume the old contracts and nail down new ones for the transport of goods and passengers to and from the Golden Isle.

The following two decades saw upheavals of lesser and greater natures in the hierarchy of the city. Power changed hands sometimes unexpectedly, fortunes rose and fell and

distant cousins occasionally found themselves in charge of a House after the closer line mysteriously died. At last, however, the shifts faded, like ripples in a pond will settle, and a coherent power base emerged.

At this time, an appointed Imperial governor rules Galedon, under approval by the central powers at Thera, and is advised by a council composed of members of the predominant Houses and leading guilds. Trade has very nearly resumed its pre-Scourge levels. A rising tourist market also swells the coffers as visitors come to sample the complex pleasures of Galedon, said to be able to arouse even the most jaded of tastes. On the one hand, the city is a model of commerce, serving as an important routing point for cargoes bound for Thera itself. On the other, the atmosphere sinks further into decadence as visitors demand more and more elaborate diversions.



## ON THE LAYOUT OF THE CITY

Built originally on the shores of the Venives, the straits that run south-southwest from Okonopolis down to the sea, Galedon's elite began moving into a nearby crater long before the Scourge. The great bowl-shaped depression was apparently caused by a massive explosion or the fall of an extremely large object hundreds of years previously. Nobody really cares about the theories now, since the Elementalists pronounced the area stable and construction began on what would later become the city's Citadel. The center of power still remains in the Caldera, even though the predominant work of shipping is done on the shoreline nearby.

### Galedon, Three Districts One City

Galedon divides into three primary regions, Dockside, Cliffside and The Caldera. Most of the city's trade still passes through Dockside. Ships of the air and sea make port each day, offloading cargoes from all over the Empire, taking on shipments for the Golden Isle itself and all its possessions. Through the crowded streets pass longshoremen and ship

crew, passengers and clerks and merchants. Restored after the Scourge, the streets are still straight as a ruler, but many of the colonnades have fallen, the arches crumbled and the original buildings collapsed during the ravages of the Scourge. Rebuilding has been more economical, the styles more utilitarian, less elegant. While still obviously a Thera city, the true art of the architect is now reserved for the Caldera. Dockside has lost much of its identity and can't be told at a glance from any other port of call.



Houses from intercepting private and business communications.

Between Dockside and the Caldera stands Cliffside, primarily a residential community for Dockside workers and those not yet fortunate enough to find a home in the Caldera. The Dockway, a stone street wider than Vivane's Greatwalk, cuts through the center of Cliffside, forming the main artery between Dockside and the Caldera. Pedestrian bridges have been built over the Dockway to allow foot traffic to pass from one half of Cliffside to the other without being run down by the wagons and carriages.

Entry to the Caldera is through The Cut, a natural break in the west side of the wall, down a long approach through a very well-

guarded pass and going between the columns that helped focus the wards for the Citadel. New gates are being constructed at the top and bottom of the Cut, along with new barracks and way stations for the watch that patrols the vital passage. Rumor has it that Governor Miklos may soon create a new division of the watch specifically to guard the Cut. Most travelers must proceed down a long stairway, almost like Throal, stairs and stairs and stairs with landings big enough to hold hostels and taverns. The ramps to the left and right are reserved for cargo wagons going down and up respectively. Passenger carriages are not allowed on the ramps. Owners of such carriages must maintain carriage-houses at the entry to the pass. There are sedan chairs for those who can afford their hire (eight silver per person going down, twelve going up) for the three-mark walking journey down (a good five marks going back up), and cable cars with their pulleys driven by teams of mules at the top for the truly wealthy residents and their guests, at a cost of two gold per person. A faster cable carries message capsules for documents that have to go back and forth between the House heads and their companies. There's also a row of heliographs at the top of the caldera, to flash messages over the wall of the caldera. I'm told that each House has its own mirror and its own code, which changes frequently to keep other

Galedon in the Caldera is a city of terraces and stairways, of overlooks and balconies and great monuments of buildings rising from the valley floor. The arrangement has sorted itself out into a vertical banding of the regions. From the top down, these are Highslope; Upper Trades, or The Upper; The White; Lower Trades, or The Lower; Downslope and The Flat. The floor proper of the caldera, The Flat, is taken up by the central powers and by those trades that require large expanses of flat space. Downslope tends to be an extension of the Flat, primarily occupied by support buildings for housing servants and goods used by residents of the Flat. At the north and south ends of the Flat, the two primary schools of the city extend from the Flat well into Downslope. The lower levels of the walls are inhabited by the merchant and tradesman classes, hence Lower Trades. Further up the slopes, where the view is good but the travel is still reasonably easy, the wealthy have their homes in a band of ostentation that encircles the Caldera, a girdle of white marble and hanging gardens known as the White because of the primary building stone. Above them and beyond the White Wall in Upper Trades are the poorer tradesmen, and perched on the steepest slopes near the top of the crater, the region known as Highslope, are the homes of the very poor. While it may seem odd that the most destitute would have the best view and a high ground advantage over the wealthy, it's not quite like it seems. The slopes at the top are the least stable. From time to time, the ground gives way and one of the shacks goes tumbling down, frequently taking others in its path with it until the whole mess fetches up against the White Wall. Also, travel to the top levels is arduous, and strictly controlled, since it must pass through carefully regulated corridors in the White. Carrying anything that could annoy the wealthy through the official routes simply isn't allowed.





## APPEARANCE OF THE CITY

While originally of classic Theran architectural design, the physical layout of Galedon has seen numerous innovations over the centuries. The initial settlement was laid out with long straight streets, hollow-square homes enveloping secluded gardens, and elegantly tapering business and governmental structures with colonnades and arches in the Imperial style. Within the Caldera, however, building on the slopes forced changes in the design of homes, at least for the more well to do.

Across the Flat, many of the buildings are constructed of pale grey native granite taken from the eastern slope, or from a quarry just outside the Caldera to the East. Buildings in the Upper and Lower are more usually of wood, and in Highslope of light wood, closer to huts than homes. The White is the jeweled belt of the city, its terraces and balustrades of gleaming white marble from the eastern quarry, many of its buildings faced with the same white stone if not made entirely of it. Throughout the city, plant growth is lush, the fertile soil of the Caldera spreading a blanket of green everywhere the ground is not covered. Walkways vein the bowl of the city with brown and grey, packed earth and laid stone forming the arteries for pedestrian traffic. Very few vehicles and beasts are allowed into the Caldera, and none on the slopes. Lifts operating at a slant in hidden shafts take care of bringing heavy and large goods to the residents of the slopes. Similar hidden shafts carry wastes back down, the tunnels eventually joining into a single outlet that empties into the river where it exits the Caldera.

While the Citadel's elemental shields were raised, their effect on the view must have been spectacular. Imagine looking out over the Caldera floor from one of the estates in the White, seeing the buildings rising from the dense plant growth like a lost city in the jungle, and over it all the shimmering red-gold canopy of the Citadel's main wards, crackling with veins of incandescent blue fire. I can easily understand the love of power that grew in this place. You have only to take

your breakfast out on the terrace, spending your morning gazing out and down over the vista spread before you, to experience the feeling of command that such a view brings. Living with such would naturally engender a lust for control, and with many Name-givers feeling as if they alone owned the city, competition for power would heat more swiftly than a pot over a bonfire.

Dockside has some of the same problems that the dock quarter in Ardatha has. Many of the buildings were put up quickly, so that commerce could resume after the Scourge. Now, with business rolling along at a brisk clip, tearing down the hastily-erected wooden structures and putting up honest stone would cause a terrible interruption. Some of the more prominent businesses, such as Tonisitoa Shipping, that have House resources behind them, have put up stone edifices while maintaining their old wooden offices, then transferred their operations in only a day or two using a small army of hired laborers. Sole proprietorships and smaller businesses, however, as well as enterprises such as taverns where location is paramount to their trade, cannot afford to do this. As a result, many of the older wooden buildings are still in heavy use, and showing signs of wear. Fire is a major hazard in Dockside, as is collapse of the oldest and most hastily constructed buildings. Unfortunately, it takes the building falling down or burning up to get some of the businesses in Dockside to rebuild. The streets here are wide enough for wagons to pass, a frequent occurrence especially around the warehouses. Foot and wagon traffic is heaviest during the early



morning and the late afternoon, as ships arrive and depart on the morning and afternoon tides respectively.

Between the two regions is a high stone wall, currently lined with scaffolding at its north and south ends as new stonework extends the decades-old wall to match the city's expansion. The gatehouses that stand to either side of the Dockway are likewise of recent construction, the old gatehouses having been torn down to make way for larger buildings capable of supporting the iron-reinforced wooden gates that can swing out across the Dockway from either side. Tolls are collected here, a copper for a person on foot, a silver for one on horseback and a minimum of four silver for a wagon, with the price going up according to size and weight. Passengers in the for-hire coaches that ply the route between Dockside and Cliffside are expected to cover the six-piece toll in addition to their fare.

Cliffside is characterized by streets growing progressively narrow as they move further from the Dockway. Hard by the artery that links Dockside and the Caldera, the lanes are wide enough for two beer-wagons to pass abreast. A few blocks away, one wagon passing causes everyone else to move aside. By the time the further reaches are attained, two horses may have trouble passing one another without their riders coming to be on intimate terms. The

buildings also grow progressively closer and smaller. At the side of the Dockway, three and four story stone edifices with walkways between them stand forth proudly, each independent of the other. The Dry Market, halfway between the Dockway and the edge of Cliffside, is mostly two-story buildings, with the lower half of stone and brick and the surmounting part of wood and plaster, often with exposed framing. The upper stories tend to overhang the lower, sometimes enough that the alleys are in permanent shadow, and a person standing at the window of one house could easily hand something across to a person in the window of the next. Merchants display their wares hung from the upper windows of their shops, increasing the overhead clutter so badly that trolls catch their horns in the dangling merchandise. Occasionally one of the windowboxes comes crashing down under the weight of the exuberant plants grown by the residents, causing breakage, injury and confusion. At the periphery of Cliffside, the homes and shops huddle together as if for warmth, sharing walls and sometimes roofs. They rarely go over a single level, like troops afraid to put their heads up for fear of archers. Wood and brick are the primary materials, stone being too expensive for most of the inhabitants. Fire is a constant concern in the poor areas, as it is in any city.

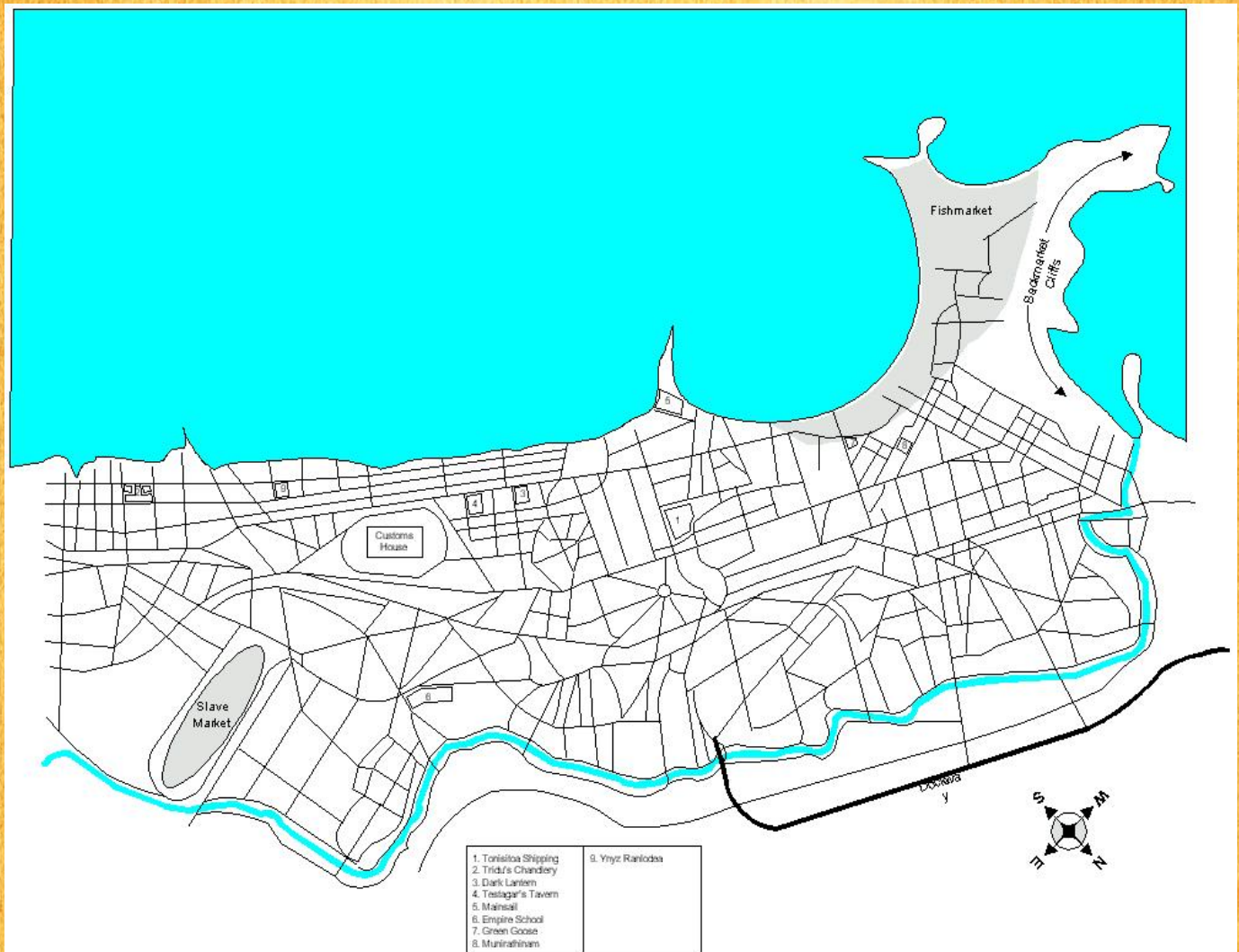


## NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN DOCKSIDE

### Dockside

Everything from small coastal fishers to Theran warships to oceangoing t'skrang sidewheelers finds port here. Getting large ships in and out of the harbor requires taking on a local pilot and following a guideboat. The harbormaster's pilots normally charge one silver per ton (loaded weight) for harbor and docking fees. This rate can fluctuate according to the captain's relationship with the harbormaster.





Map of Dockside

### Customs House

Standing tall at the center of the docks, the current Customs House was built from the plans of the original on approximately the same site after the Scourge. The impression of indestructibility and timelessness bows the head of many a ship captain, accustomed to a world where change is constant and inevitable. The central tower with its four corner spires casts a long shadow over the docks, giving the building its local nickname of The Sundial.

Here, the offices of the Harbormaster hum with activity throughout the day, as cargo taxes are paid, slip assignments are obtained, and disputes among sailors and merchants are resolved. Around the back, the Harbor

Patrol maintains its office and its gaol, where drunken sailors recover their sobriety and offenders against the Harbor Code spend their nights, the days being given over to hard labor under the watchful eye of the Patrol. Upstairs, rows of clerks maintain the records of the docks, accounts and ship's papers and records of mastery. The central tower holds the apartments of the Harbormaster, where the holder of the office can survey their domain at leisure. To each quarter about it, lesser towers serve as lookout points for the Harbor Watch and the offices of the Harbor Signal Corps, their signal officers and weather-forecasting elementalists. Each of the outer towers has its dome painted a different color, giving a further set of landmarks for finding one's way in Dockside. Ropes strung from the



outer towers to the central carry signal flags, visible from out in the bay with a spyglass. Every sailor knows to look to the towers and their signal lines for the weather, news of arrivals and departures and emergency information, learning the code of flags early in their career.

### **The Fishmarket**

Wrapping sharply about the curve of the shoreline bluffs at the north end of the docks, as the cliffs rise above the piers, the Fishmarket began as a meeting point between the fishermen who worked the channel, and the people of the city. Once a trading point is successful, it draws more vendors the way honey draws flies. Within a generation, the Fishmarket expanded to the bustling marketplace it is today. While the day's catch is still offered down at the low end of the market, closest to the piers, the high ground has been taken by merchants selling the cargoes of ships passing through, farmers from up the coast hawking their crops, local craftsmen offering their services and the inevitable entertainers of all stripes.

Today, the Fishmarket is a riot of colorful tents and brightly painted stalls, a roar of many voices bargaining all at once and the smells of exotic perfumes, pungent vegetables, fish and sweat and dust. Business is done quickly, with haggling down to the polite minimum, so that the deal can be concluded and the next customer served before they move to the stall next door. Only about half of the people seeking bargains here are private citizens, the remainder being buyers for concerns further inland. Much of the goods offered in the Caldera pass through the Fishmarket on their way to more upscale merchants.

Visitors looking for good deals should exercise caution. While the most amazing things are offered for sale, some of the merchants taking advantage of the speed of business to move illicit goods semi-openly, prices can be higher than usual and the pressure to buy quickly very strong. Questors

of Chorrolis use the noise and confusion as cover to exercise their abilities, charging exorbitant prices for trinkets, then folding their stalls and being away before the glamour wears off and greed gives way to regret. Thieves also work the area, not only pickpockets and cutpurses but fraud artists who boldly convince their victims to hand over their hard-earned silver for empty promises. The best strategy is to enter the bazaar with no more silver than you are willing to part with, and a clear idea of what you are pursuing.

### **Slave Markets**

Two primary markets exist, one in Dockside and one in Cliffside. Crowded and noisy, the Dockside market is for slaves bound elsewhere in the Empire, and is attended primarily by slave traders and ship captains. The occasional mine boss also turns up, bidding for new labor to replace the workers swiftly worn out by the fierce toil of the mines to the east of the city. Normally, slaves sold in this market are from nearby lands, and the risk of escape and flight is deemed too great for them to be sold to local owners, but the mines offer little chance of this. Not only are there few routes out of the depths, but the harsh labor soon leaves the slaves unable to make the journey.

By contrast, the Cliffside market is nearly humane. Its slaves are either those bred to captivity or domesticated in distant places. The barbarism of carrying Name-givers off from their native lands to forced labor in another place, no matter how gently padded the bars of the cage, is a topic for another treatise. An amphitheatre carved into the stone of the Caldera wall serves as the center of the market, with the pens (more like dormitories than the stockades of Dockside) being carefully downwind. On those rare occasions when the wind shifts, air elementals keep the smell away from the customers. Vendors circulate throughout the audience, purveying chilled drinks, food both hot and cold, perfumes, small trinkets and lists of the day's available merchandise. An



air of indolent decadence pervades the place, like the smell of a midden kept masked by scented oils. Slaves are paraded up onto the dais at the focus of the curved seating section one at a time, their virtues extolled and bidding handled with reserved subtlety. In contrast, Dockside has four stages, and slaves are normally sold in lots, with much shouting of insults and encouragement by the audience and auctioneer respectively. Whether in dust and heat or comfort, though, the business remains the same: the buying and selling of Name-givers as if they were so many cattle.

Enough; I cannot maintain objectivity.

### **Tonisitoa Shipping**

One of the few non-Carinci mercantile interests in Dockside, Tonisitoa was one of the first freight companies in Galedon, formed by a consortium of Naseyn nobles to import goods for local use. Food and other consumable imports still form approximately two-thirds of the concern's business. The other third is primarily composed of transient goods, bound for other ports of call. The company brings in a few items by special request, having space for hire on their ships for nobles of the right families with sufficient funds.

Before the Scourge, Tonisitoa opened offices in other Theran ports, including on the Golden Isle itself. Once the Scourge was over, these offices swiftly re-established contact with the headquarters in Galedon, linking up a number of ports in trade. As one of the first companies to re-establish itself post-Scourge, Tonisitoa enjoys a strong advantage over its competitors. Its agents signed a large number of farmers to exclusive contracts, consigning their crops to Tonisitoa for many years, an exclusivity that has been enforced with arms when words will not suffice. Tonisitoa Shipping does not take kindly to other companies encroaching on their territory. Some of their captains have gained notoriety for conflicts with terrible beasts or would-be pirates out on the open

sea, mounting the heads of their vanquished opponents on the bow of their ship to further enhance their reputation for ferocity.

### **Tridu's Chandlery**

Wedged in between a sailmaker's and a pierfront tavern, Tridu's Chandlery does not appear much different from the usual Dockside business catering to the shipping trade, the Carinci mark on its shingle telling only of a certain quality of goods. Its limited frontage, however, belies the size of the establishment. Once through the door and the small front room, lined with used items of low value to reduce the temptation to thieves, the customer finds himself in a two-story high shop filled with everything a ship could possibly need for a successful voyage. From rope in twenty-three grades, to sea chests, to buckets of pitch, to expensive brass and glass encased compasses, Tridu's can supply all of the hardware and maintenance supplies required to operate an ocean-going vessel.

The interior of the shop is rigged like a ship, with rope ladders going up to the shelves lining the walls all the way to the ceiling, ropes hanging from the transverse beams and everything lashed and stowed as if the store were about to weather a storm. Owned and operated by t'skrang from the Ryeefa niall, the clerks seem to enjoy their work, clambering through the rigging after items and swinging across the shop as if it were the deck of a riverboat. The proprietor, Enayid Tridu, is of lean and tall build, with bright green skin and a vivid purple crest, usually dressed in a bright white shirt, a heavily embroidered red vest and blue trousers, the shipboard costume of his niall. He mans the till at the entry to the main room of his shop as if he were the captain of a ship astride the bridge.

Occasionally items are for sale in the back room, admission to which seems to be based on introductions. While the main room carries all of the standard gear, I am told that the back room contains items for defense



against pirates and the like. I assume this to mean ship's weaponry, but lacking both an introduction and the intent to purchase such items, I was unable to verify what may or may not be for private sale. Certainly, if Tridu deals in ship's guns, he would have to do so quietly to avoid conflict with the city's elementalists, who like to keep a corner on the market for such items.

### **Amphitheatre**

Well inland of the center of the docks, where bedrock can be reached before the water table, lies the original city amphitheatre. Local legend has it that a great many strange markings had to be scoured from the stones after the Scourge before the facility could be used once more. Certainly, it's easy enough to verify that peculiar stains reappear whenever the weather turns bad. Productions in such times have a way of going sour, taking a darker tone that the playwright intended. The guard tends to keep a closer eye on the amphitheatre at such times.

For the most part, however, the amphitheatre serves its old, pre-Scourge, purpose -- entertainment for the Dockside populace. Plays, musicians, political gatherings and rituals presented by the cults of the Passions keep the amphitheatre busy on a daily basis. So busy, in fact, that occasionally two groups show up at the same time, both convinced that they have the right day. In one situation like this, my guards and I were actually offered gold by the stage manager of the players to drive the Questor of Chorrolis and his followers away. Of course, not being one to risk offending the Passions, I declined.

The amphitheatre is operated by the Dockside city council, through the office of Public Works. They charge a nominal fee,

based on the type of presentation. Questors of Dis or Astendar, less-known playwrights and troubadours are charged only a few silver, while Questors of Chorrolis, the most popular player companies and visiting adepts pay in gold. The fee for use of the facility appears to be based on the expectation of return from the audience.

### **Typical Dockside Encounters**

- A gang of drunken sailors passes by, and shouts something at the group. It might be an insult, but it's hard to tell, as their speech is not clear.
- The party's path is blocked by a grubby old man who says that he is a storyteller, and offers to buy the party a round of drinks if they'll tell him of their adventures.
- Out of a nearby tavern, the barkeep chases a customer who's skipping out on the bill, straight into the adepts.
- A small child begs a coin from one of the group. Whether or not she gets it, she snatches something small from the adept and runs away down an alley.
- A minstrel on a nearby corner is singing a ballad that sounds suspiciously familiar. If listened to carefully, it tells a horribly mangled version of one of the group's past deeds.
- Down on the docks, a cable breaks and a crate of fruit falls from above the group.
- In one of the residential areas, a load of trash or a chamberpot is dumped out of a window far too close to the adepts.
- A group of Indrisan travelers, including many children, lots of baggage and a pet monkey, stop the group to ask for directions. Unfortunately, they've gotten separated from the one person among them who spoke Theran, and of course don't know a word of Throalic.





## NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN CLIFFSIDE



## Cliffside

Beside residences, Cliffside is home to a good number of businesses. Some of them cater to the Dockway traffic, while others provide necessary services to Cliffside's inhabitants. The city's secondary marketplace is located here, as well as the offices of many tradesmen's guilds.

## Dry Market

Named after the bazaar's remoteness from the water and for the predominance of dry goods, the Dry Market sprawls from North Nwi nearly to Rinmei, and from just north of the Dockway across Iyodo Road and halfway to North Caelossie. Slowly, the Market is growing into the surrounding area, as people living there grow tired of the noise and dust

and sell their homes to merchants looking for shop space, and as new street vendors set up their stalls and tents on the edge of the existing bazaar. Taverns have also sprung up in some of the buildings enveloped by the marketplace, doing a thriving business in food and drink, many sending out pushcarts or vending through windows at peak hours to sell food to more people than can fit through the doors.



Like the Fishmarket, the Dry Market is a bustling, noisy place, but not as random in its layout. Where the Fishmarket grew in a largely empty place and developed into a tangled maze of tents and stalls, the Dry Market has grown around a public square surrounded by existing buildings and streets. While more orderly, it feels also more cramped. The press of the throng gives ample opportunity to pickpockets and cutpurses, so keep your silver in an enspelled pouch or around your neck if at all possible. Items for sale here tend to be more aboveboard, as the watch patrols more heavily than down in the Fishmarket. Unusual and semi-legal items are occasionally available, but the contacts to find them are harder to make, and may require introductions by trusted go-betweens. Considering the tight control in this city over spellcasting and summoning supplies, charms and other items of a magical nature, developing contacts with the underside of the marketplace may be the only way that independent magicians can pursue their Art.

The merchants here are very persuasive. I thought myself a worldly dwarf, well-traveled and able to resist the importunings of the bazaar. It's very nice, but I really didn't need a new drinking horn.

### **Four Roses**

Halfway down the Cut is a leveled area with a pair of taverns, where the weary traveler may pause in the hours-long hike through the pass that connects Caldera and Cliffside. The better of the two is on the north side, bearing a sign of four yellow roses in a spray emerging from a tankard. The Four Roses is under the proprietorship of Avder Guoneanke, a patient human woman who seems to do as much business in salt water basins for foot soaks as tankards of ale. Many travelers pause here in their journeys up and down the Cut, partially for rest and partially for the atmosphere, as tales of travel are encouraged in the common room. The building sprawls upward, spreading over the

face of the Cut's north wall. While this makes navigating the interior a bit tricky, with all the flights and half-flights of stairs, short halls and blind turns, it does mean that every room has a window looking out over the Cut Road.

The food here is decent enough; the quality is good, although the menu is unpredictable, based on whatever Avder can get from shipments going by and the cheapest of the offers for consignments directly to her establishment. Bread and cheese are always available. The content of the stewpot varies wildly. Ale is another issue entirely. Avder's cousin is a brewer up in Cliffside, and he sends a wagon down the Cut twice a week with barrels bound for the Caldera, and a couple to drop off at the Four Roses along the way. While they don't have a proper stout, you really can't expect to find such a thing in establishments run by non-dwarfs unless they're catering to a predominantly dwarfen clientele. In the Halls of Throat, every tavern has stout, regardless of the race of the proprietor.

Avder's clientele has a good deal more elves and humans and orks, the first glad of her extensive wine cellar and the last no doubt miffed by hurlg being as notably absent as stout. Value received for the traveler's silver is good overall. The side benefit of hearing tales from every traveler stopping by who can be convinced to speak, not hard considering that Avder gives a free ale to anyone telling a good story, makes a stay at Four Roses a must for anyone wanting to get a feel for the city and its place within the Empire.

### **Preytern's Scrolls and Such**

A busy emporium located at the corner of Tuc and Ipaj in the Dry Market, Preytern's deals in things written. The front of the shop, which does a good two-thirds of the business, is packed with desks, each one occupied by a copyist or clerk, who for a few coppers a page will make clear and exact copies of any document or produce a new one at your



behest. For a silver or two, they'll check your sums, and for a few more, they'll even do them for you. Many of the local Name-givers whose literacy is not up to writing their own correspondence or filing their own taxes come here to have letters written and official forms produced. Access to messengers and private carriers of regular postal routes is available here, as are boxes where you can receive mail if you either have no permanent address or do not wish to give yours out. The clerks will even read your mail to you, if it is in a language you do not read or above your literacy skills.

More elaborate work is done in the back of the shop. Here, engravers, scribes and limners ply their trades, turning out documents that are true works of art. Elaborate copies of business licenses for display, marriage contracts, title deeds and other important documents are produced here. Books are also copied and bound in this part of the shop, the smells of leather and glue underlying the crisp scent of paper like old friends standing by waiting to be noticed. Shelves to the right as you go back are lined with copies of books that can be purchased, either the original or for a lesser price a new copy, the owner charging a higher price for taking the knowledge out of his store entirely.

Once past the bustle of the front of the shop, mostly open to the street with just enough walls to keep the materials from blowing away in an errant breeze, and on through the dusty interior, past the high desks of the artists and the shelves of books and racks of scrolls, up a winding, narrow staircase too small for an obsidian or troll to even consider climbing, you arrive in the inner sanctum. Here on the second floor, in a cluttered chamber lined with bookshelves, stacked with papers and scrolls and maps and books left open to significant passages, the master of the emporium holds his court. Genseth Preytern is at first difficult to spot. The elven wizard embroiders his robes in patterns of grey and brown, with the occasional dab of pale color, and blends into

his surroundings like the lizards of the Servos Jungle. His beard is long, but still a light brown in color, elves not showing their true age until very late in life. Here, he pursues his studies, and answers questions from those customers who make it past the clerks, past the limners, and past the large ork (did I mention him?) who stands guard at the base of the stairs.

Genseth is very well read, and can deal with queries not only of a magical nature but of historical, geographical and military knowledge. He has delved into the True Patterns of objects, searching out their secrets; unbound charms and cursed items from their bearers; and translated works in ancient and arcane tongues for other magicians lacking his facility with language and the work of the mind. He prefers to do all of his work in his study, and will only leave it for a high price and for an extremely unusual and interesting investigation. While his prices may seem high, normally quoted in gold rather than silver, Genseth is a wizard of the Tenth Circle, well established in the community for many years, reliable, and highly knowledgeable in his Art. His license, displayed in the back section of the downstairs shop, is a magnificent work, heavily embellished, with renewal dates going back to before the Citadel wards were brought down and the city opened at the end of the Scourge.

### **The Vessel With The Pestle**

Not a terribly distinctive sign, the shingle of this apothecary shop bears a golden cup with a thick rod emerging from it. Well off the beaten path, on Ryftan between Darra and South Nwi, the shop nevertheless has a steady clientele, most from the surrounding neighborhood. For many years, Taneligu Duvisl, the elven woman who owns the shop and lives over it, has dispensed healing herbs and advice to the Name-givers of northwestern Cliffsides. Her stock is small, but she has nearly every medicinal herb known, and can compound potions, tonics, teas and poultices to cure nearly any



complaint, which she always dispenses with suggestions as to how best to use them and how to avoid the complaint in the future.

I could not help but notice the large sigil of Garlen on the wall behind the counter, and a matching sigil worked in silver on a chain about her neck. When I asked her if she were a Questor, however, she smiled sweetly and told me that a Name-giver's relationship with the Passions was a private matter. With such a polite refusal, I could not press the issue, no matter how great my curiosity. I settled for petting one of her cats, which had leapt up on the counter and was insistently pushing its head under my hand. She did acknowledge that she is the primary source of healing information in her neighborhood. The residents I spoke with had nothing but good to say of her, and told me innumerable tales of various illnesses and injuries that she had treated with amazing success. I dislike leaving a mystery unexplained, but will have to let the reader draw their own conclusions as to the source, nature and extent of her healing abilities.

### **Wave and Hammer**

Most Name-givers see only the metal goods shop with its sign of a blacksmith's hammer floating above the sea. Few are aware that behind it lies the only weaponsmith Forge in Cliffside. The goods in the shop, ranging from nails to kettles to swords, are all produced by the members of the Wave and Hammer Forge. While some of the items are expensive, the price reflects their quality. Weapons may be brought to the shop for repair and for study, the Forge always needing items with which to try its apprentices.

The elder I spoke with, a muscular elven woman Named Dalesu, said that her Discipline took no notice of political divisions. If a weaponsmith from Throal itself came by, she'd personally see to it that

he got room and board, and she'd be delighted to exchange knowledge with him regarding their craft. She also mentioned that her Forge had a dispensation in its licensing to allow for transient workers, which would cover said Throalic weaponsmith and allow him to earn his keep during his stay without having to be licensed himself.

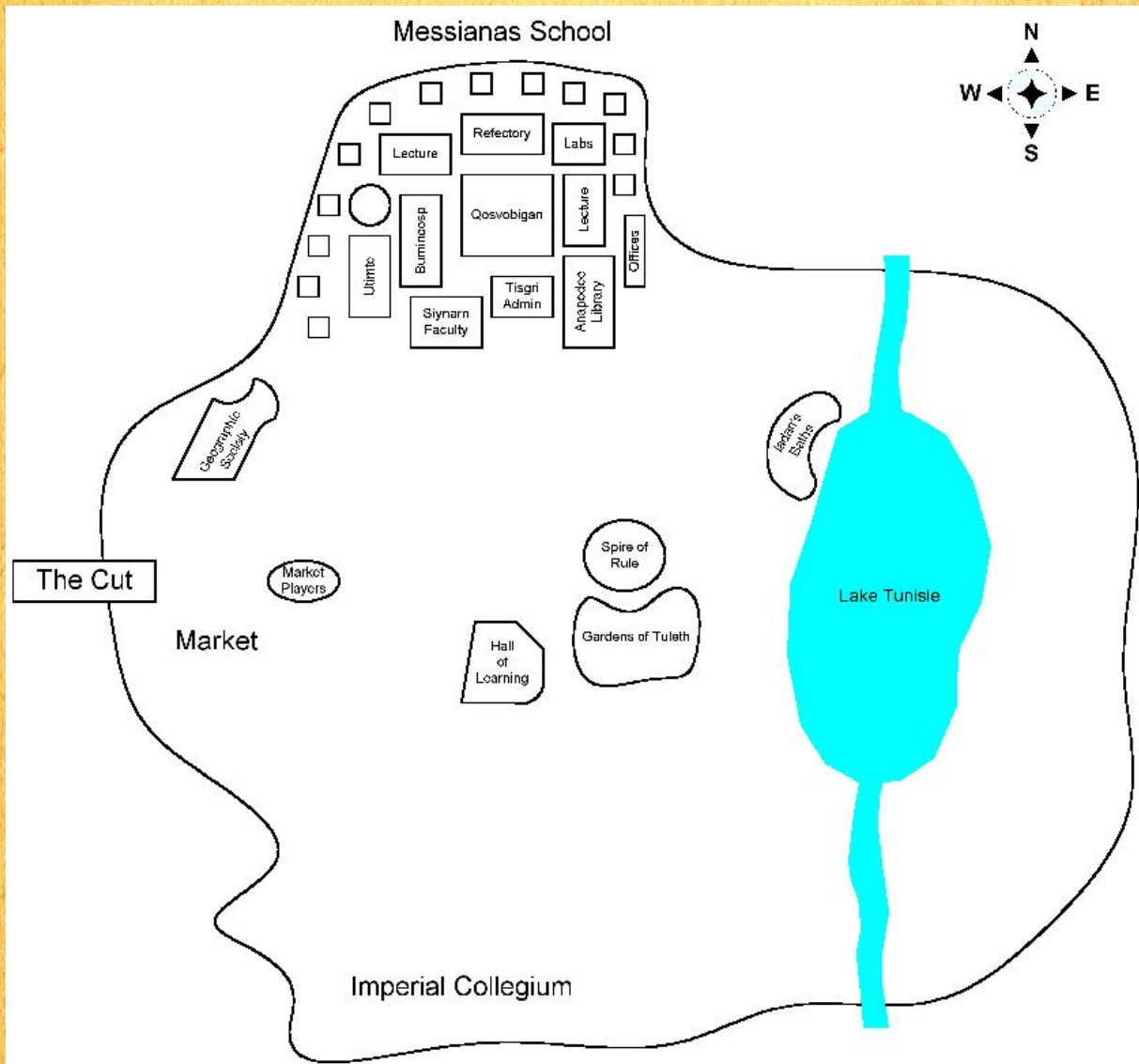
### **Typical Cliffside Encounters**

- An enormously fat woman tries to cross the bridge over the Dockway at the same time as the group and refuses to give way.
- A petty functionary of the tax office insists that the group has offended him in a trivial way, pushing past him to get into a building or something similar, and threatens to cause lots of trouble if they don't apologize to his satisfaction. Considering this will involve groveling, it's not likely to happen.
- An ork merchant approaches the group, extolling the virtues of his fine wares. How touchy he is about rejection is to be determined by the GM.
- A large group of children on their way to the Empire School swarm around the adepts, wanting stories of adventures and trying to touch everything and maybe swipe a souvenir. The schoolmaster chides the adepts for distracting her class.
- An obviously wealthy man is beating one of his slaves on a nearby corner for dropping an expensive package. Most of the passers-by are turning their faces away and avoiding the spectacle.
- An illusionist paces down the length of a trench filled with sharpened stakes running along the base of the Cliff, weaving the appearance of solid ground over it. The clerk following behind him, checking his work against a map, warns the adepts against a potential misstep.





# NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN THE CALDERA



## The Caldera

Thanks to an introductory letter from Commander Mallesin and my status as a field researcher for the Hall of Records, I was able to secure rooms at the Geographical Society of Galedon for myself and my guards. This kept me from having to dip too deeply into our reserves, as lodging at an inn commensurate in quality to the Society would have been pricey. Travelers coming to Galedon should expect to pay half again as much as normal for Guild-level inns and better. Cheaper lodging is available, but not in the Caldera. Cliffside and Dockside both have hostels and flophouses for the economic or copperless traveler. A good blade and the willingness to use it is a necessity for staying in these places, as their security ranges from poor to none whatsoever.



## Gardens of Tuleth

Just south of the Spire of Rule, the Gardens spread a lush carpet of green across the Flat. Exotic plants from all across the Empire have been arranged so artfully that the arrangement itself is not noticeable. Instead, the eye feasts upon a riot of plant life apparently growing in its natural setting, in perfect health and exuberant display. Trails of crushed white gravel and grey flagstones wind through the gardens from one side to the other, allowing people traveling near the Spire to pass through and rest their minds and eyes on the way to their destination. At each turn of the path, tables and benches are set out, and more private meeting places are available in the arbors.

Enterprising food and drink vendors bring their pushcarts to the entrances of the Gardens, as they are not allowed to hawk their wares within. Luncheon finds most of the tables occupied. The dinner hour is quiet, as most people prefer to meet at more formal dining facilities for the evening meal. During the night, the occasional guard patrols the Gardens, but generally leaves alone anyone who does not appear to be in distress. In the arbors, the guards make their presence discreetly invisible, so as not to disturb anyone choosing the private areas for a tryst. If trouble does arise, most of the guards who patrol the Gardens carry wands that quietly incapacitate, provided by the upper-form students at the Messianas School as part of their required work.

## Geographic Society of Galedone

Operating under the auspices of the Geographical Society of Thera, such as the one in Vivane that lent me such invaluable aid, the Geographical Society of Galedon occupies a solid, respectable structure in the northeast of the Flat, midway between the Cut and the Messianas School. The ground floor holds a collection of artifacts and documents donated by Society members, a small but highly diverse assemblage, well worth perusing. On the second floor are the

offices of the cartographers, chroniclers and Pursewarden of the Society, as well as the dining hall, the parlor and the library. On the third floor are the guest quarters, provided to visiting members of the Society and the occasional traveling scholar. The top floor is reserved for the offices and rooms of the chair and vice-chair of the order, and the private collection, items too valuable or potentially dangerous to be on display in the ground floor hall.

Among other artifacts in the private collection that I was able to view were the Spear of Davros, the personal weapon of a pre-Scourge Horror Stalker, one of the founders of the Discipline; the journal of Tian Elduath, an elven wizard who helped translate the Books of Harrow, and later came to Galedon to found the Messianas School; and the Box of Souls, a chest of metal and crystal that supposedly can entrap the spirits of living beings. According to the documentation, the Box holds (among other spirits) Elialen Ravitagur, the Indrisan nethermancer who built the Box as a waystation for moving his soul from an old body to a young, fresh one; Urtvur Blood-drinker, the chief of a troll raider tribe from Vasgothia who went utterly mad and led his clan in a rampage against Thera's outposts ten years before the sealing of Thera; and Irdz'pagh, a Horror and quite possibly the one that drove Urtvur mad. The chair of the Society assured me that the Box was far safer locked up here, behind the protections of the Society's walls, than in the storage rooms of the Eternal Library itself. Not even the wizards and elementalists of the Messianas School had been able to broach the building's formidable defenses, in their quest to take possession of the journal of Tian Elduath. I have not slept nearly so soundly after that night, however, knowing that the soul of a Horror lies only one story above me.

## Hall of Learning

The central library of Galedon, its collection pales in comparison to that of the Messianas School or the Imperial Collegium,



but those entities reserve access to their holdings to students, faculty and visiting scholars. The Hall of Learning makes its works available to all. While treatises on the deeper aspects of the arcane or point by point discussions of the battles of the Imperial military will not be found here, maps of the Empire and works discussing its regions certainly will be, along with books on farming techniques, general knowledge of most crafts pursued by Empire citizens, and a fascinating treatise regarding the history of the invae in the Theran Empire.

The imposing three-story building is lavishly decorated with murals and sculpture of Imperial history and depictions of the dangerous beasts formerly native to the region and the hunts that rendered the area safe for colonization. Its mosaic floors map the Caldera, the immediate surroundings of the city and the shoreline upon which it resides. Paintings of every former official of the city who had the slightest hand in the financing of the facility line the walls of the entry hall. Entrance, search and copyist fees are comparable to those of the Hall of Records in Throal.

### **Spire of Rule**

Rising fifteen stories above the Caldera floor, a full three levels higher than any other structure, and with a two-story-high needle atop to add yet more height, the Spire of Rule stands like the gnomon of a sundial: obviously the center and guide of its surroundings. It tapers from a broad complex of offices at its base to the Governor's apartment at the top in a graceful sweep, the sides curving inward sharply at the bottom, the arc smoothing toward the top. Many Name-givers have expressed the opinion that the Spire looks more as if it grew than was built. Faced in black basalt from the quarry in the southeast of the Caldera, and trimmed with gold at the cornices and on the claws and beaks of the carved stone beasts adorning the ledges between each level, the Spire is a commanding presence in the Caldera.

The ground level is taken up with the government offices most often visited by the average citizen. These include the Tax Assessor, the Bursary, the Office of License Inspection, the Registry of Deeds and Claims and the Registry of Names. Here the citizenry pay their taxes, receive government funds for contracted work, apply to have professional licenses granted, reviewed and renewed, and file the paperwork for land and property transfers, births, marriages, divorces and deaths. The papers to prove the identity of any Galedonian citizen are here, in the Registry of Names, as well as to track their relatives by both blood and legal relationship. Likewise, the ownership of any piece of real estate, be it a well, a bridge, a building, or the land a structure occupies, can be traced in the Registry of Deeds and Claims.

The upper levels of the Spire house the offices of the licensing boards and officials. Generally, the more important and the higher in social rank the office, the higher in the Spire it is located. Thus, the office of Public Waste Management is on the second level, right above the main public offices, while the office of the Board of Magicians is near the top, only a level removed from the apartments of the governor. A clever person will note that this means that not only do supplicants to the Board have to climb all those stairs to get to the office, but so do the Board members. Waiting on a landing midway between the entrance of the Spire and the office before or after hours, or during the nooning, gives the prospective supplicant a chance to buttonhole his or her favorite Board member, and present a case in less formal surroundings. Such a clever Name-giver will no doubt be able to determine in advance which Board members will react favorably to such an approach, and which will not.

I met up with an interesting woman here, a dwarf of reasonable financial means who made her living acquiring property from the dead. Suzo Lyrkartner spends her days



methodically paging through the records, cross-referencing title deeds with certificates of birth and death. When she finds a death certificate that lists no next of kin, and a title deed in the same name with no recent transfer of ownership, she takes the papers to the tax office. If the back taxes on the property have not exceeded half its worth, then she pays the back taxes and assumes ownership of the property thereby. Suzo then turns around and sells the property on the open market, usually for quite a tidy profit. She laughed when I told her that her scheme was likely to become less profitable. After all, she'd explained it to me in detail, and I'd written it down for the benefit of the Hall of Records.

"Few people have the patience," she told me. "I go for days, sometimes weeks, without finding anything. Then sometimes when I do find a nice bit of property, it's all tied up in a dispute over a will, or some cadet branch of the family trying to inherit. Of course, I have to go and look at the place and decide if it's worth buying. Last week I had one, sounded so good, but there was the most Passions-cursed awful tavern right next door, with drunks passed out in the alley in the middle of the day. Nobody'd pay good silver for property like that. No, I don't think I'm in any trouble for competition. But I'll tell you this." She leaned close and dropped her voice to a conspiratorial whisper. "I can tell you things about who's related to who and who owns what that would curl your beard. The clerks at the registries don't know those books half as well as I do. And not all my money comes from buying up abandoned property. I've made good silver tracking things through the records, and reporting them to the right people -- or making sure they're never found." With that, she polished off the ale I'd bought her and would say no more, insisting that she had to get back to the Spire before the tax assessor closed his office.

### **The Arena**

Built well before the Scourge, and preserved through it with the rest of the

Caldera, the Arena has been a focus of Galedon's social life for hundreds of years. Other, similar, facilities exist in Dockside and Cliffside, but they are always referred to by name -- Gondol's Arena, the Red Arena. Only one in the city is simply The Arena. Gladiatorial combats are not the only events held here, although blood sports seem to be as popular among the upper classes as the lower. Mass rituals in celebration of the Passions, performances by Troubadour adepts of legendary standing, and the trials of particularly notorious enemies of the Empire have also filled the ten thousand seats with eager spectators.

The best areas are marked off with low stone walls and the sigils of the Great Houses. Seats here come with slave attendants, magics to keep bad weather at bay and choice refreshments. The lesser areas are served by enterprising vendors, who haul their goods up and down the ramps between the stone benches carved out of the hillside crying their virtues and cost, and pay a percentage of their takings to the Arena Council for the privilege.

Chambers below the Arena serve as holding pens for condemned criminals and slaves waiting to face the dangers of the exhibition floor. Successful gladiators are housed well away from the squalor of the pens, and only have to endure them briefly on days when they must fight. The rest are kept in conditions worse than the animals used in some of the shows. At least the beasts can count on fresh water, regular feedings and sunlight. Machinery to raise and lower scenery for theatrical productions and the cages of beasts to be unleashed on the victims takes up another area. Routed around these subterranean rooms are the sewers and water feeds, to wash away the wastes from the public and private garderobes.

Roniv Aepskuenos, the arena's Pitmaster, is a large and burly ork from a cadet branch of House Zanzan. He carries himself with the usual gruffness and straightforward



efficiency of his House and his race. What some people may see as callous indifference to the blood and death of the arena, he views as being more aware of the briefness and ultimate meaninglessness of life. People die, he says with a shrug; enjoy what time you have. His responsibilities include buying slaves and beasts for the bloodier events, and acting as stage manager for the beast and gladiatorial shows. Occasionally, he acts as a talent scout for the arena, sizing up likely contenders among the free citizenry for armed competition. Any time new adepts arrive in the city, and their legend includes tales of great combats or spectacular magics, Roniv pays a call to offer the adepts a chance to earn some gold fighting or doing special effects (if they're licensed; if not, he could help them get their paperwork in order).

Elatl Vislumisz, the arena's top illusionist, is a short, slender elven man. I found him to be abrupt, impatient and exacting to a fault, a difficult person to deal with. No wonder the other illusionists in the arena are unhappy; they work for a taskmaster who is impossible to please. Being of House Qelirc, Elatl is always searching for ways to outdo the Narlanthi or make them look bad, frequently managing to outmaneuver them in contract bidding for the arena. Unlike some of his more scrupulous relatives, and scruples being such a relative thing in this city, Elatl will take goods and work of less quality for more silver from a competitor of the Narlanthi just to spite his House's rivals.

Not every Name-giver linked to the Arena in the public mind are in the employ of the facility. Feov Binzuto, a tall human man with long honey-blond hair in a complicated braid and usually dressed in brightly colored robes, describes himself as the necessary opposition that the government needs to keep its officials honest. They, in turn, refer to him as a rabble-rouser and a nuisance, when they are being polite. At least one high government official has privately accused him of being a Questor of Raggok, or worse, Lochost. Such charges, however, have never been made publically. As the charismatic

leader of the Open Window, a group dedicated to letting the light of day into government proceedings, Feov frequently organizes rallies at the Arena. His rants, unfortunately, not only inspire the citizens to keep an eye on their government, but seem to also cause a rise in civil disobedience and domestic violence. No riots have occurred yet as a result of his harangues, which is fortunate for him, as that would get him arrested as an enemy of the state, popular public figure or not. Feov plays a dangerous game, using the public eye as a shield against attack. As long as he keeps the attention of the public, no one moves against him for fear of creating a martyr. If his entertainment value wanes and his popularity falls, however, he could easily disappear one night.

### Typical Encounters e

- A noblewoman and her retinue pass, the guards insisting that the adepts make way.
- An artist approaches the group, offering to pay them handsomely if they'll pose for a mural he's working on up in the White. Feelings may change when the party discovers they're to be models for the conquered evildoers in a heroic representation of one of the House's founders.
- A merchant calls the group aside and quietly asks if their magicians would consider doing some work on the side. He'll pay well for having security added to his shop without the authorities knowing about it. This should sound very shady.
- A young woman of noble birth walks up to the gates of one of the manors in the White, calmly pours a large jar of alcohol over herself and sets herself on fire. She's been dumped by the heir of the house after she turned up pregnant.
- A student from the Messianas School approaches a magician in the party and offers her a small amount of silver (but it's all he has) if she'll teach him some of the more advanced techniques he won't learn in class for another year or two.



- A student from the Collegium approaches one of the group's combat types (Warrior, Swordmaster, Archer), and offers money and trade goods to be taught a few tricks that'll give her an advantage over her fellow students.

- The funeral procession of a noble crosses the path of the adepts, winding from the White down across the Flat, through the Gardens of Tuleth and up the opposite wall to the cemetery, where the pyre is lit.



## LODGING AND DINING

Within the Caldera, as I said, are inns of Guild and better quality. Private resorts do a thriving business here, some of which require letters of introduction from previous guests to obtain reservations. A few of the estates in the White are known for private entertainments, and there are rumors that others may even indulge desires on the part of their guests that may cross the line of legality. Sufficient silver will buy any pastime in this city, or so I am told.

Food likewise ranges from pushcarts to extravagant feast halls that require introductions. Prices and quality are both higher within the Caldera. Dockside does not offer any dining better than a tavern, while Cliffside actually has a few good dining halls.

As usual, I have reviewed a number of lodgings and dining establishments throughout the city.

### Dark Lantern

Region: Dockside

Rating: \*

Pricing: \*

Hard by the piers, this ramshackle two-story wooden building seems to stay up only because the woodworms have all seized one another's tail. Getting in requires careful negotiation to avoid the leavings of last night's departing drunkards, and occasionally one of the drunkards themselves. Inside, the smell is held down only by the fact that the windows have no glass and the shutters are left open year 'round regardless of the weather. Tables by the walls are much less popular when it rains. The bartender is a surly ork by Name of Deren, who probably gained his disposition from drinking too much of the sour, thin beer he serves.

For the traveler who is short on silver or in too much of a hurry to seek better lodgings in Cliffside or the Caldera, this is one of the best of a bad lot. Look for the sign with the flameless lamp, and remember to bring your

own blanket, as I've heard that the vermin are bad. Breakfast and dinner are available, but should be sought elsewhere, as the cook was thrown off his last ship for making the crew ill.

### Testagar's Tavern

Region: Dockside

Rating: \*\*

Pricing: \*\*

A block and a half away from the Dark Lantern, the neighborhood is much improved. From warehouses and dockside bars and houses of ill repute, the transition to chandlers and shipping offices and taverns gives one hope for the city. At the corner of Increase and Waggoner's, Testagar's holds a good location for the dining business, and does a brisk trade for all three meals. The tavern is owned by Testagar of House Carinci, captain of Carinci's Evenstar Rising, who bought it as a shore investment. He and his crew show up about once every half year, check the accounts, skim off some of the profits and enjoy a huge feast that quite probably accounts for the rest of the profits. Then they sail off, not to be seen again for



another half year.

Meals are very basic tavern fare. The stew had no more than the usual amount of unidentifiable objects, the bread was hard but unmolded and the cheese actually quite edible. They have the advantage of being close to the docks, so their wines and ales are recent imports. Be cautious of the wine and let it settle in your tankard, as the cask may have come off the ship only that morning. While not the cheapest place to eat in Dockside, it's relatively clean and you get what you pay for, which last is a large recommendation as far as I'm concerned. A good number of the warehouse and shipping clerks take their nooning here, so someone with sharp ears could easily track the day's cargoes from their chatter. Private dining and rooms are not available.

### **The Mainsail**

Region: Dockside

Rating: \*\*\*

Pricing: \*\*\*

Probably the best inn and tavern in Dockside, the Mainsail is frequented primarily by the command crews of visiting ships. Sailing memorabilia line the walls, the honor place being given to the mainsail of the Silver Dragon, the flagship of the Galedon fleet during the war with the coastal pirates. Kept safe through the Scourge by the descendants of the owner of the previous Mainsail, it's said that the sail was the core pattern item for the Silver Dragon, and that any ship whose captain rigged the sail and knew how to weave its pattern together with his own ship's could have the same luck and prowess as the Dragon. Getting the sail away from Taxuf Tivoroder, the current owner, would be difficult. Getting a room is not much easier, as ship commanders have first refusal. The meals are generally plain fare, but well seasoned, made from fresh ingredients and served in large portions. Windlings should note that tankards and dishes of their scale are not available.

### **Blue Dwarf**

Region: Cliffside

Rating: \*\*\*

Pricing: \*\*

While a rowdy place full of mercenaries, draftsmen and heavy laborers, the Blue Dwarf gains standing for the quality of their fare and the lower than normal fees charged. With their clientele being primarily humans and orks, with the occasional troll or dwarf, the food is largely meat and bread, stews and pies, traditional plain fare. Prices are commensurate with the average, but the portions are half again as large.

My guards and I quickly discovered that we could order for three and feed four with ease. Their ale is dark and strong, not quite a proper stout but certainly drinkable, and served in very large tankards. I would suggest that elves and windlings avoid the Blue Dwarf, as the first may find the fare too plain and heavy for their tastes, and the latter may very well be accidentally crushed in the press. At the nooning, competition for tables becomes fierce and many customers end up eating their meals standing in the street in front of the building.

### **The Crowned Swan**

Region: Cliffside

Rating: \*\*\*

Pricing: \*\*\*\*

I found this establishment to have pretensions above their capabilities. They cater to wealthy travelers, Theran officials of low rank who cannot find lodging in the Caldera and merchants who do not have House connections in the city. Barsaivian accents will turn up the noses of the staff. I was told that rooms were not available, nor could I get a table in their dining hall, yet a Theran courier who came in after me was immediately provided with a key and a menu. Security was poor, as I was able to wander about unchallenged through the



guest room halls and into the service areas. The menu I took lists the usual Theran dishes, skewed toward human and elven palates, but the prices are high. Like so many of this sort of establishment, they charge for the presentation. For as much silver as they charge, each dish should be accompanied by a quartet of musicians and a juggler. It's said that they offer most services a traveler could desire. I wouldn't know.

### **The Azure Palette**

Region: Cliffside

Rating: \*\*\*

Pricing: \*\*\*

A much more reasonable accommodation for the more well-to-do traveler. The staff here are more concerned with the color of your coin than the flavor of your speech. As long as you comport yourself like a civilized Name-giver, you'll have no trouble obtaining rooms and meals, along with other amenities. Prices and services are on the level of Guild inns of Barsaive. The decor is decidedly Galedonian, with canopied beds equipped with insect netting, couches upholstered in soft fabrics, and high arches in the doorways. My guards were very uncomfortable here, and thankful that we did not stop more than the night before returning to our lodgings in the Caldera. Threndok was concerned that all of this comfort would dull his edge and leave him vulnerable to the dangers of life. He failed to see the humor in it when I suggested he ignore his bed and sleep on the floor. Vorst. Hmft.

Dining is superb here, the wine cellar well stocked and the kitchen able to produce that masterpiece of Theran culinary art, the uyglar. Specialty dishes are offered according to the shipments that have arrived that morning. The servers will inform guests who appear well-heeled enough to afford them, to avoid embarrassing guests who might not have as much silver. I'm told they occasionally send out hunting parties when rare and tasty animals are spotted in the

region, in order to procure the ingredients for their more innovative cuisine.

The establishment's name derives from its sign, a large artist's palette stained heavily with light blue paint, set on pegs over the door. The clerk informed me that it once belonged to the painter who executed the murals on the inner walls of the building, grand, sweeping scenes of the surrounding countryside and the more noble pursuits of members of the Empire. If watched for a time, some of the murals will begin to move, playing out scenes from the Empire's past. Local legend, so the clerk told me with a smirk, obviously not believing it himself, says that the artist wove secrets of Theran history into the murals, but that only someone possessed of deep knowledge of the artist herself and a key item could unlock the visions stored in the paint.

### **The Flame**

Region: The Caldera, Lower Trades

Rating: \*\*\*

Pricing: \*\*\*\*

With its entrance dominated by a brass bowl the size of a troll's bathtub holding a roaring column of fire, the Flame can be seen from all the way across the Caldera. Some Galedonians dismiss it as being too flashy, but it does a brisk trade among visitors to the city and the more well-to-do tradesfolk. Offering both hearty and elegant repasts, its dining hall caters to the tastes of most Name-givers. Beware the Maracian roasted goat. Orks and trolls may find its spiciness amusing, but I required another tankard of ale to quench the flames. With its rooms divided into two wings, the east and west, the Flame serves two quite different markets. To the west, rooms are available by the night or the week, with or without attendants. To the east, rooms are offered by the hour or the night, with or without companionship. There seemed to be a great deal of people in black, some of them in not much of it, scurrying about the east wing. Prices are half again as high as you might expect, but then that's



normal for establishments in the Caldera.

The staff tells me that the Flame is owned by an elemental, one of those responsible for maintaining the stability of the Caldera. They said that as long as the fire burns in the bowl out in front, the region where the Flame resides will stand. Apparently a few times the fire has changed color, and the owner has immediately gone into seclusion with a few close friends, also elementals, until the flame returned to its normal tones.

### **The Rose Colonnade**

Region: The Caldera

Rating: \*\*\*\*

Pricing: \*\*\*\*\*

Classic Theran architecture translated into the vertical, the rows of ornately carved columns fronting the building's three levels give it the appearance of a much taller structure. I found the pink granite and the constantly repeating motif of roses a bit disturbing, far too reminiscent of elven styles within the demesne of the Blood Wood. This far south, though, thorns are just thorns and the locals can view a rose without looking for droplets of crimson.

Well beyond the quality of a Guild inn, the Rose Colonnade's services are priced accordingly, with the additional inflation of a Caldera establishment. Expect to pay handsomely. Tipping equally well is required to receive prompt and courteous service more than once. Food served here is designed for elven palates, and may not satisfy orks or trolls. Their wine cellar is well stocked, so I am told, although I am no expert on Theran vintages.

Entertainments are likewise geared toward more refined sensibilities. Troubadours of good talent, who know the Theran repertoire, find frequent employment in the public areas, the private dining suites and the feast halls. Paintings and sculpture by artists from all over the Empire are on display throughout.

Currently, a convocation of illusionists is taking place, with followers of that Discipline from all over the Empire staying at the complex. Many of their meetings and workshops are closed to the public, but exhibitions of their Talents may be seen in the grand dining hall every evening. Having that many illusionists about makes dealing with everyday matters somewhat problematic. I was in the middle of discussing the menu with one of the kitchen staff when a very attractive dwarf woman came up to me. Pouring forth a gush of flattery, she proclaimed her admiration of my scholarship, and her opinion that I must be terribly brave to confront such horrible dangers in the pursuit of knowledge. I was quite taken with her, naturally, and gave her my undivided attention, completely ignoring the poor cook. Just as the man was about to leave and return to his duties, the dwarf woman vanished, revealing a windling in the robes of an illusionist. She laughed and told me that I should not be so easily distracted from my calling, or my reputation would suffer. Finishing the review of the menu while still smarting from the embarrassment was not easy.

Later, the incident gave me cause to think. This woman was, I believe, the first windling I have encountered within the Empire, certainly the first one as merry as those in Barsaive. What has happened to the windlings of the Empire? Surely they are not all found within the ghareez?

### **Icefall House**

Region: The Caldera

Rating: \*\*\*\*\*

Pricing: If you must ask ...

Done in white marble with a blue cast to it, carved in elegant folds and with light quartz embedded in strategic places, Icefall looms over the Flat like a glacier, a wall of ice scarcely held in check. Within its cool embrace, nearly any thirst may be quenched. I admit, I have seen a good many things on my travels, and like to think myself a dwarf



of refined tastes and broad experience, but the elegant decadence of Icefall threatened to overwhelm me. Decor elaborate and subtle teases the senses. Tableaux with hidden meanings turn out to be living slaves, and what I took at first for a human maiden standing unclad at the reception desk was on closer approach a statue painted in lifelike fashion. Scents of exquisite cookery, rare incense and the occasional whiff of intoxicants float through the air, borne on currents fanned by captive air elementals. Music plays constantly from behind carved screens, the artists hidden and placed so that echoes misdirect the listener. Rooms are not available, only suites, and most dining is either there or in private salons.

From what I was able to observe, many inhabitants of Galedon use the facilities to conduct trade, hoping that their competitors

lose track of the business at hand in the flurry of sensual distractions. Meetings to discuss and close contracts worth thousands in gold are held here, as are convocations to plot the tangled threads of the complex tapestry of Galedonian politics. Many sellswords and even adepts find employment guarding such events, providing they can handle the sybaritic environment without losing track themselves of the task.

More exquisite and hedonistic establishments exist, I am told, but are reserved for the extremely wealthy, the most highly placed, and those they favor. You only discover their existence when you achieve the social rank to attend them.



## SCHOOLS AND COLLEGIA

Literacy is every bit as important to the Therans as it is to the people of Throal. Every bureaucracy requires a constant supply of new clerks and scribes to keep it running smoothly. Even the poorest neighborhoods have access to basic schooling, and the child who shows an aptitude for letters or numbers can rise above the poverty of their origins, just as in Barsaive. The more I see of the people who make up the Theran Empire, the less easy it is to dislike them. Their government is still the enemy of Throal, and the practice of slavery is still loathsome, but the general populace, especially the common people, are so much like the people of Barsaive that it is hard to keep the differences in mind.

The ancient system of apprenticeship is practiced as widely in the Empire as it is in our own lands. Many children are sent off at an early age to learn a trade, often precluding attendance at a state-run literacy school. Some of these do not achieve proper reading and figuring capabilities until they reach journeyman in their craft and have the time to spare for training outside of their field.

### Dockside

#### Guleso Tpoget Academy of Literacy

Down in Dockside, there is only one school, run by the government. It teaches children (and the occasional adult) basic reading and figuring. Promising students who complete the available lessons are sent to the more advanced school in Cliffside.

While the school does have a proper Name, being the Guleso Tpoget Academy of Literacy, Docksiders refer to it simply as the Empire School, or the Dockside School if discussing it and the Cliffside establishment. The building was damaged recently, its windows broken and a fire deliberately set. Classes are being held at a warehouse down



the street until the damage can be repaired. I can think of no reason to attack a school, unless those with no talent for literacy are

## Cliffside

Cliffside houses numerous schools and private tutors for students who show great promise at the Empire schools and can afford further training. Most of the schools in Cliffside are sponsored by various trades, to provide a pool of potential new workers. Thus, there is a clerk's school, a copyists' school, a school for teaching basics of carpentry, and so forth. Each of these is maintained by a group of tradesmen, who invest silver to cover the costs left over after the students have paid their fees, and in return receive exclusive rights to recruit graduates into their businesses. Many of the private tutors also provide research services and the abilities of their Discipline, if any, to the public for a fee. Magical knowledge is unevenly represented here. While wizards may be found with relative ease, nethermancers and illusionists are scarce and the only elementalists in Cliffside are the ones who either could not get into the organization within the Caldera, or who ran afoul of its politics and were posted outside the more desirable region.

### Mozerl Rogosh

Mozerl Rogosh is one of the latter. I found the tall, cadaverous human at his customary place, at a table in front of the Green Wing, sipping an ale and casting a jaundiced eye on the passing crowd. After I bought him a more expensive stout, he agreed to talk with me.

"It's all under a dynasty," he said, "but not any one House. You'd think there would be a House monopoly on elemental magic, as there is in so many other cities. No, this is a dynasty across House lines. It all dates back to the elementalists who first secured the Caldera. Their students and children, the ones who took up the Discipline, went on to become pre-eminent in their field. When

jealous of the chance it offers for others to climb out of their mean surroundings and make a better life for themselves.

time came to build the citadel, and put up the wards, the same lines took the contracts. There was never a real bidding process. They were simply handed the work by the Governor. All through the Scourge, they plotted and planned and made alliances and married for political ends and to increase the concentration of magical power. So what do we have now? A load of inbred politicians holding the reins, controlling who can and cannot practice the Discipline within the Caldera. If you're not of their lines, or willing to kiss their feet, it matters not how well versed you are in your arts nor how easily you may command the elements. Bah!" He polished off the stout and waved the serving maid over to fetch him another. "If I could but scrape up the silver to leave this stinking pesthole -- " And then his attention was taken up with the new tankard, and mine with fishing out a silver to pay for it, and so I lost the rest of his remark. Shortly after that, I lost his attention, as he slumped down in his seat and fell into a drunken sleep.

The elementalists within the Caldera do seem to be a cliquish lot. They certainly won't speak with anyone without an appointment, and that secured with a personal introduction. See my notes on The Flame for a peculiar situation involving the followers of this Discipline within the Caldera.

### Lanut Kwang School of Basic Education

Nearly a replica of the Empire School down in Dockside, the building for Cliffside's basic literacy academy is in much better repair. Officially the Lanut Kwang School of Basic Education, the citizenry generally refer to it as the Cliffside School to differentiate it from the Dockside School. Training in the Theran language and in basic mathematics,



history and geography is available free of charge to citizens under the age of majority for their race. Adult literacy classes are offered for a nominal fee.

Every morning, children swarm from all over Cliffside to the School, creating a traffic hazard. They never look where they're going, darting out in front of moving wagons, playing tag around the adults on the streets, and acting as children do the world over. I greatly enjoy telling the stories of my adventures to a willing audience, but not on the streetcorners. As soon as I was identified as an adept, my guards and I were overrun by small Name-givers asking more questions than could be answered with nary a pause for breath between them. Hardly had I begun to try to fit explanations to the queries, than the school bell rang, and the entire mob dashed madly off down the street, with one of my

## **The Caldera**

As usual, private tutors are available, many of whom in this region have a waiting list and a very exclusive clientele. Money alone will not procure their services. Connections and family background are vital, especially for tutors who reside in the White. Anyone moving into the area who wishes to take students must first acquire a permit from the council that governs the subject. Licenses are expensive and few, and of course the committee is formed of pursuants of the subject it governs. If you do not make a good impression with the elementalists of the Caldera, you will not be allowed to teach elemental magic, or even practice it within the Caldera. See my notes on licensing under Concerning Government.

Schools likewise consider the background and potential power of a student before admitting him. Ability alone will only gain a place at the Empire literacy academy. Licensing and dynastic control over both the faculty and the makeup of the student body are more severe than with private tutors. Three tutors and two schools stand out and

boot knives in their possession. I would strongly recommend staying off the streets in the early morning, until the bell has rung to summon the hordes to their daily confinement.

Competition in the Cliffside Empire school is fierce, as graduates in good standing are nearly guaranteed a lifetime appointment to an Empire post. More than once, House rivalries and attempts to compromise the Empire's testing system have resulted in spilled blood. The lesser Houses, the ones outside the Caldera, hold great store by the outcome of the classes. In a city as prone to intrigue as Galedon, this means that students are vulnerable to becoming pawns in House plots to ensure appointments to key offices, so that future contracts may be secured with ease.

bear closer examination.

## **Jevex Purworafi**

One of the city's most widely renowned nethermancers, Purworafi originally comes from Indrisa, having settled in Galedon in his youth. Many years ago, he led a team of adepts who drove the Horror Bone Crown from the city, firmly establishing his place. Now in his old age, Purworafi takes the occasional student, preferably one who has already passed his Journeyman Circles, and reveals to him the deepest secrets of the nethermantic arts.

Purworafi resides in the White, at the north end of the Caldera. While his house is not large for its neighborhood, it is nonetheless imposing, encrusted as it is with small sculptures of beasts both real and fantastical, and magical sigils in complex patterns. Disturbing to the eye, these are more than decoration. The nethermancer's home is said to be better protected against magical assault and astral invasion than the



central demonstration hall at the Messianas School. The families to either side tend to avoid crossing in front of his home, and I cannot say that I fault them for it.

It is said that Purworafi can see the souls of those who come before him, and has twice singled out a child for training long before even the child's parents suspected their offspring of magical capabilities. I do not know the truth of this. I only know that I passed the elderly human one day in the Gardens of Tuleth. He was dressed in robes of cinnamon and azure, richly embroidered with designs that hurt the eye if studied too long. Leaning heavily on a staff, he was closely attended by a young Maracian dwarf boy dressed all in black who struggled manfully under a load of books. As he passed my table, he glanced toward me, and our eyes met for the briefest of instants. A cold shudder swept through me, and I knew without the slightest doubt that he had seen all the way to the core of my being, held every secret of my life, knew my Pattern more thoroughly than I did myself. Then his gaze traveled on, and in the aftermath my only clear thought was that despite the throng, he seemed to have no trouble progressing at his own pace. The path cleared before him, and I understood why. Passions save me from nethermancers.

### **Vetl Iec**

An elven member of the House of Medari, Vetl Iec trains the progeny of her House in history and philosophy. From the first days out of the nursery through adulthood, Vetl's lessons form the core of their understanding of the Empire, its past, its present and the ideals that shape its future. A woman of stately grace, she carries herself with the dignity that befits the person who shapes the minds of her House, and the self-deprecating humor of a scholar of history who is aware of her significance in the multi-millennia span of the Empire.

Residing at the estate of J'tiag Ongbikyom, the patriarch of House Medari in Galedon,

Vetl makes it clear where her loyalties lie. The guest-house where she lives, set well back behind the white marble walls of the estate, is small and easy to miss against its resplendent surroundings. She has never married nor had children of her own, being wed first to her calling.

While she refuses any student who is not of her House, she nonetheless enjoys the conversation of other scholars, and may be found in the evenings at the Gilded Scroll in Lower Trades. Anyone who can at least hold their own in discussion may be able to learn some fascinating bits of history from her. Vetl also presents a lecture once a month at the Hall of Learning, in which she discusses a notable event from the past and what lesson could be learned from it in light of current events. These lectures are attended by high-ranking members of the city government, and occasionally even visitors from Thera itself. Admission, at the last such lecture thirty silver, must be purchased months in advance to assure a seat, and even then those of low rank may be bumped for a visiting dignitary.

### **Nisiqu Osif**

An aging t'skrang woman of stern aspect, Nisiqu was the premier dancer in the city for many years. Now with her limbs gnarled and stiff, she still rules the world of dance as the leading choreographer and dance teacher in the city. Other performing arts teachers defer to her in matters of stage presentation, body movement and selection of musical accompaniment. Holding court in her studio in Cliffside, the cost of that much space being prohibitive in the Caldera even for an artist of her stature, she rarely appears in the Caldera any more due to the rigors of traveling down the Cut. Even in a sedan chair, the trip is difficult for her. Every morning finds her banging out rhythms with her staff and tyrannizing her students, who while they fear her would do anything for her. Training under Nisiqu guarantees a place in the most prestigious dance companies of the Empire, if you survive.



In the evenings, her gregarious t'skrang nature takes her down the block to the Stars and Garters, a tavern frequented by Cliffside's artist community. There, she has dinner and whiles away the late hours in the company of her friends and contacts -- dancers, playwrights, actors, setbuilders, troubadours, musicians and composers, and even the occasional sculptor, painter or theatrical illusionist. A great deal of business in the performing arts world is transacted around her table. Just being in the background, you can meet and talk with people who get things done in the city. Actually obtaining a seat at Nisiquo's table puts you in the company of the most powerful members of the artistic community.

### **The Messianas School**

Operating under the authority of the School of Shadows in Thera, the Messianas School is the only training academy for the magical arts in Galedon. Anyone who does not attend the School must make private arrangements to learn magic in theory and practice. As with the remainder of the city, elementalists are predominant, with wizards second in terms of the number of faculty positions held, then nethermancers and illusionists collectively coming in a distant third. One would think that there would be a stronger illusionist presence, especially in a city as given to intrigue as this, but if there are more, they are well hidden. Rumors are quietly told of a secret order that meets in Cliffside, but I was unable to chase them to ground. Those I spoke with seemed either completely in the dark on the subject, or nervous and unwilling to speak with me ever again.

Occupying the north of the Flat, the school is an odd melange of architectural styles, each building having been designed in a competition among the city's architects. The composition of the selection panel varied from one to the next, and so did their tastes

in structures. Fortunately, there are many trees to shield some of the more clashing designs from each other, and somehow the campus resolves into a harmonious whole. Between the eccentricities of the campus itself, and the eccentricities of the faculty and students, a certain charm is achieved, leaving the visitor feeling to be in the company of his favorite uncle, the one who can always be counted upon to liven a dull dinner by doing something completely unexpected and possibly inappropriate.

Central to the collegium is the Qosbovigan Lecture and Demonstration Hall. Named after a nethermancer who gave his life to uncover a vital secret of the Horrors in the days before the Scourge, it's said that his ghost occasionally appears to people wandering alone within, especially in the service tunnels below or in the watch-turrets high above. All of the more complex exhibitions of spellcasting and summoning are held in the main hall, whose wards are replicas (at lower power, due to the falling-off of mana) of those that protected the Caldera during the Scourge. The two subsidiary lecture halls and the classrooms upstairs are shielded by the wards over the building itself. Used primarily for theoretical classes and the occasional demonstration of a minor working, they do not need the terrific protections of the main hall. The building is done in the old Thera style, after the School of Shadows, with heavy columns and narrow, peaked arches. On either side of the main entrance, a granite lion lies gardant on a plinth of green marble, the stones repeated inside in the granite columns supporting green marble bowls of light quartz to illuminate the entry. Portraits of many of the previous faculty hang throughout the building, with the current dean and governing council frowning at the main doors from the wall opposite.

Close by stands the novice residence. Bumincosp Hall looms over the campus the way a kila hangs over a doomed village, an imposing, forbidding edifice of dark grey stone that may without warning plummet



from the sky, causing substantially more damage to the ground below than to itself. Nicknamed Boom and Crash because of its proximity to the demonstration hall, living there encourages the early mastery of wards, silence spells and sleeping draughts. The residence for journeymen, Utimte Hall, is on the far side, where the noise from Qosbovigan is reduced. Only a short bit of lawn separates the two buildings, giving rise to one of the more notable architectural collisions on the campus. Utimte Hall's delicate spires and elaborate stained-glass windows, compared to Bumincosp, give it the semblance of a windling standing next to a troll. Students above the rank of journeyman normally make private arrangements for their lodging off-campus, and so do not have a residence hall dedicated to their use.

Scattered around the back of the campus, edging into Downslope, are the residences of the faculty, forming a rough horseshoe that encloses the campus on three sides. At the apex, on the slope to give it obvious precedence over the rest, sits the home of the Dean, an edifice hereditary with the title. Built in a modified form of the classic Theran villa in style at the founding of the Empire, the building sprawls delicately with neatly trimmed gardens encircling it like ripples in a pond. Only a single story, the pink marble walls enclose an interior, private garden at the center of the hollow-square design. Some previous Deans have used this garden to express their creative urges, or for therapy after a hard day riding herd on a fractious, egotistical faculty. The current holder of the office, an Elementalist of the Thirteenth Circle, an elven woman of House Narlanth by the Name of Nerenkilia Te'alo, prefers to use it for meditation and for receiving private social appointments. It is said that you can tell what the situation is by where she receives you. If the garden, then the issue is not dire, but if you are received in her office at the back of the house, you should cancel everything else and be prepared for world-shattering news, most likely to your detriment.

The refectory is worth noting, not so much for the quality of its repasts, as for its being one of two buildings in the city designed by Vostler Auraynt, the dwarf architect who also designed the Eternal Library at Thera. Its elegant lines blend in naturally with the surrounding landscape, giving the impression of something that grew rather than being built. Unfortunately, it's a case of an exquisite setting for a gem of poor quality. Meals for the students are no better than those in the meaner taverns in Cliffside. The faculty, of course, enjoys much better in their private dining hall on the upper floor, rank having its privileges.

At the front of the campus, the edge that faces the remainder of the Flat, are the library, the administration building and one of the two faculty office buildings. These three present the face of the school that most of the city sees, casual visitors to the campus being discouraged for tolerably obvious reasons.

Five stories in height, the Anapodee Memorial Library is one of the tallest structures in the city, surpassed only by the Spire of Rule and the watchtower at the base of the Cut. While its holdings do not in any way rival the Eternal Library, or so I am assured, it remains one of the larger repositories of wisdom in the Empire. Not only magical knowledge, but information on every subject known to Name-givers is stored there, as one never knows what abstruse bit of knowledge may be key to unlocking the deeper secrets of the arcane. That, and wizards do love their books. Admission is restricted to students, faculty and invited guests.

With its long, colonnaded front and high, peaked windows, the Noriat Tisgri Administration Building bears an uncomfortable resemblance to an astral being that I will not Name here. Some of the students make quiet, nervous remarks only half in humour about the building swallowing the occasional unfortunate, usually a novice, never to be seen again. All



of the administrative staff have their offices here, ranging from the bursar to the registrar. Of the faculty, only the Dean maintains an office here, and only as a place to store papers that she intends to get to someday. Important documents are taken to her at her residence or at her laboratory.

Endowed by an adventurer with more gold than he knew how to spend, Siynarn Faculty Hall is an elaborate structure more resembling a miniature palace for territorial governance than a place for faculty of a magical collegium. Its numerous spires and glittering multicolored glass give it the air of a stage setting for a play set in some long-lost elven kingdom. Within, the passages wind and twist with abandon, frequently looping back upon themselves or ending abruptly. Stairs are infrequent, with inclined passages or gently curving ramps preferred for changing levels. Only the faculty and their assistants can find their way through the maze with any semblance of ease, and then only after they've had a few years of experience.

At the back of the campus, to the east of the refectory and wedged in under the trees by the eastern arc of faculty homes, lies the faculty laboratory. Quite possibly more dangerous than Qosvobigan on graduate examination day for nethermancers, the two-story edifice is divided up into numerous small laboratories, each assigned to a different faculty member. Security measures are extreme, the fundamental principle of the free sharing of knowledge among fellow magicians notwithstanding. No member of the faculty wants another to see what's going on in their private research, at least not until they're ready to announce their results. Free and liberal use of elementals, guardian spirits and wards makes simply moving through the hallways a risky business. Actually entering one of the laboratory rooms without the permission of the owner would be a frightful task. Stories are told of how one of the previous Deans very nearly died attempting to open the laboratory of a faculty member who passed away peacefully in her

sleep, taking with her the commands to set aside the protections.

## **Imperial Collegium of Galedon**

At the opposite end of the Caldera from the Messianas School stands the Imperial Collegium. Courses include history, accounting, military theory and officer preparation, natural philosophy and social finishing. Many of the progeny of wealthy and prominent Houses who no doubt could arrange private tutors attend the Collegium for the social and political connections that are forged during the academic years.

The faculty includes several of the more noteworthy scholars in the city. Some of them are more approachable than others, so herewith I present a few rules of thumb for the visiting scholar who wishes to exchange knowledge with his fellow academics.

Erlyn Xeotmelare, a soldier of Araucanian origin, retired from his position as a military adviser to the High Council a few years ago, and now holds a teaching position as Dean of Military Philosophy. He cuts quite a striking figure, a tall, lean human with copper-brown skin and jet-black hair, dressed usually in dark green robes from his native land, brightly-colored feathers hanging from the shoulders and seams. Approaching him with either an unusual military artifact or delicacies from his homeland will put him in a talkative mood, ready to discourse on past military situations, the present tensions and general topics in his field. Do not expect him to compromise Theran security, however, and do not ask him to if you prefer your head to remain attached to your neck.

Historians will want to visit the Raneji Library and seek out its chief archivist, Taok Anieltos, a dwarf of cheerful disposition always ready to debate the past over a mug of stout. While a very old man, he still gets around quite well, and can tell you the location of every document in the building, a quite amazing feat considering its four levels of books, scrolls, maps, correspondence,



journals and loose papers. Anielto also holds the chair of the History department. His lectures are few but well attended, and almost certain to leave his compatriots arguing among themselves for weeks.

My time with Annike Walczewska was interesting, albeit a bit frustrating. The slender blond human woman is from the far north, beyond my native Barsaive, although I could not render the Name of her land in Throalic sigils in any way that satisfied her as to the pronunciation. She speaks not a word of Throalic, her Theran is not very good and she lapses into her native tongue or pauses when stuck for the right word. On the other hand, I found her to be a brilliantly intelligent person, and well worth the intense effort it took to have a conversation. Beyond that, she carries her advancing years with more grace than many, and if her charm is an example of how her people comport themselves, then perhaps King Neden should send a diplomatic expedition to the north. Passions know Throal could use polite allies. Getting back to the subject at hand, Annike is an alchemist, one of the many semi-adepts in our world who have developed a few Talents but do not have a Discipline. She teaches herb lore, the compounding of potions, and the like. Currently, she is engaged in studies to determine why potions work. Most lists of ingredients and processes were arrived at by accident, she explained haltingly, or through trial and error. Annike wants to be able to predict the results of changes in process and new combinations of ingredients. Rael Parlesanc, a wizard at the Messianas School, has taken an interest in her work, and in a rare example of cooperation between the two institutions is working with her on the research. Between her abilities with compounding potions and deep knowledge of herb lore, and his wizard Talents in research and investigation, I fully expect them to make a series of breakthroughs in the very near future.

The campus is necessarily compact due to land in the Flat being at a premium, and the collegium actually climbs the wall through

Downslope and well into the Lower. An arc of faculty residences across the Flat and a half-circle of student dormitories up the wall form a circle around the campus, effectively presenting the back of the collegium to all approaches. The inward focus is repeated with the Deans' Hall in the center of the campus, and all of the lecture halls and other facilities facing the administration building. A predominating theme of solidity, of weight and strength pervades the architecture. Columns are wide for their height, buildings are squared off resolutely. There's a decidedly dwarfen touch to the designs throughout, with decorative moldings around the tops of the doors and windows, bright colors worked into the augmentations and trim. Visitors should make a point of looking up to see the fine work around the edges of the ceilings, and the murals in the more important buildings.

Mirgoi Hall has perhaps the most impressive of these. Known more familiarly as Deans' Hall, the two-story entrance boasts a ceiling-spanning mural of the Twelve Passions by the famous pre-Scourge artist Geyd Tusirt. Obviously, some sort of magic was worked into the mural, as the images of three of the Passions changed during the course of the Scourge. Galedon's citizens knew of the fate of the Mad Passions as it occurred, possibly something they might not have wanted to watch in the process. While still a masterful work, Name-givers do not pause to admire the mural nearly so often now, and hardly anyone climbs to the second-level railed gallery for a closer inspection. Further into the building, the halls are painted with scenes from the history of the Empire, most of the second floor being given over to the conquest of Indrisa. The arrangement of offices follows an obvious plan, with the most junior officials and the offices the students are most likely to need on the first floor, the senior officials on the second and the Dean of the Collegium on the third.

Between Deans' Hall and the student residences on the slope stands the Maatol



Nuyqamer Hall of Natural Philosophy. Its ground floor houses the Collegium's museum, with specimens collected from the local area and all over the Empire. Some of the students find it amusing to guide visitors around to the left the long way, past the glass-fronted cases of butterflies and the rack of Araucanian spears, to come abruptly face to face with a stuffed brithan, mounted in a rearing pose with mouth open and claws raised. Knowing that any such animal encountered in the museum would not be alive, I did not fall for the prank, but I'm afraid Gotir has been in a foul temper since, as he immediately drew his sword and leaped to protect me. Vorst are not known for having a sense of humor, especially when they're the butt of the joke. On the second floor of the building are the lecture halls, frequently a bit smelly from preserved specimens being dissected, and on the third floor the offices of the faculty. I spent a fine evening with K'mar Nadonu, a troll naturalist of high standing, comparing notes on the plants we had encountered in our respective travels. She tells me that she plans a trip soon to Vivane Province. Perhaps she could be guided into the company of Evanten Farseeker, for surely they are kindred souls, committed to the study of everything living.

The Collegium's refectory enjoys a much better reputation among its students than does that of the Messianas School, at the far end of the Caldera. This is possibly due to its being part of the learning regime. Every meal is served in formal style, with a fresh centerpiece and polished silver on the table. While the food is not always tremendously elaborate, it is nearly always of the finest quality. Occasionally, so I am told, one of the serving platters will be sabotaged, to teach the students what to do when they are served something either obviously wrong or not to their liking. Proper etiquette is expected at all times. The hall itself is the very model of a Theran formal dining room, with crystal sconces illuminating subtle art on the walls and on pedestals in key places, a high, vaulted ceiling embellished with clever small touches that do not distract the diners from their meals and conversation, and comfortable chairs designed for extended occupancy. I am told that at times the hall is cleared of furnishings and turned into a ballroom, for instruction in dance and formal gatherings, with the faculty playing roles ranging from important bureaucrats whose favor must be curried to visiting adepts whose influence may not be immediately obvious.



## CONCERNING ENTERTAINMENT

The people of Galedon have found a number of unique ways to pass the time. From lavish feasts where the presentation of the elegantly prepared dishes is more important than the eating of them, to savage blood sports down in the worse ends of Dockside, entertainments in this city are more complex, more intense than any place I have before visited. I hesitate to think what may be available in Thera proper, after some of what I have seen here.

As with everything else in Galedon, entertainments vary according to the region of the city. I feel that a discussion divided by geography will paint a clearer picture than an overview of the city as a whole.



## Dockside

As with any city, some of the entertainment brings itself to the people rather than the other way round. Even in the bustle and tumble of Dockside, minstrels and jugglers and storytellers find a corner of a street or a tavern in which to practice their arts. Here, though, their lives are a little more difficult. In the Caldera, when a performance is appreciated, silver is thrown, and when it's bad, a few coppers so the offending bard will go away. In Dockside, the audience throws coppers when the performance is good, and when it's bad, they throw knives. Some of the performers have picked up juggling skills so that they can snatch the blades out of the air and add them to their act, forestalling further throws and saving their show and possibly their lives.

### Storytellers

Storytellers are very popular in Dockside, people who can recount the legends not only of great heroes of the past, but of the crews of ships currently in port. Having the right tale to suit the mood can bring many coins from an appreciative group of sailors on shore leave. A good storyteller will have tales of amusing misadventures in his repertoire as well as stories of heroic feats, and will know who has enough of a sense of humor to not be angered upon hearing how they came back aboard after far too many tankards of stout and mistook the bilge vent for the hatch to the forecandle, ending up in the ship's sewage instead of their bunk.

The grand elder of the storytellers, Granny Ochlocknee, holds court in the Broken Spar, down between the deep-water docks and the barge tie-ups. A grizzled, nearly toothless human woman of advanced years, it's said that Granny knows every slip made by every officer, every strange occurrence both onboard ship and at other ports, and the smallest events of Dockside since the Scourge. Prying the tales out of her isn't that difficult, for the more common ones -- a tankard of ale and a few silver and she'll spin the yarns gladly enough. Peculiar and obscure tales may take some wheedling, though, or the offer of a tale she hasn't heard before. A good telling of a new story can jog her memory and bring forth all sorts of strange lore. The other storytellers of Dockside defer to her for the correct versions

of tales and in disputes regarding territory or precedence. More than one minstrel also owes his allegiance to her, as her opinion holds great sway with the tavernkeepers. A bad critique can result in no hearth to claim.

### Minstrels

Of the minstrels, a few have no worries as to hearths and places. Disicco Longshanks, for example, can always find a patch of deck on which to spread his cloak. The elven minstrel is a favorite of the sailors who ply the southern and eastern routes, knowing their chanties and drinking songs, as well as ballads about and from the lands along the way. He carries a harp, as many elven minstrels do, but also travels with a massive Indrisan stringed instrument nearly as long as he is tall, whose plangent twanging blends interestingly with his clear tenor voice. Apparently many of the sailors who ply the Indrisan routes have a taste for that land's long, passionate love songs, and so Disicco never wants for drink, bed space or passage when his feet grow itchy.

### Pit Fighting

Down in Dockside, there are arenas where blood sports are practiced using slave gladiators. I have seen this sort of thing before, in Servalen, but there the combatants were either condemned criminals, who could win their freedom by surviving the bout, or animals, or Name-givers participating of their own free will for prize money. In



## Gambling Dens

Galedon, the fights are between slaves kept for the purpose, or the occasional unruly slave who has been more trouble to his master than his worth. While just as savage, brutal and bloody as the pits of Servalen, the practice is even more abhorrent here because of the lack of free will on the part of the combatants. Yet, every night, the roughest of the Dockside element gathers in the galleries above the pits, to consume bad beer and smoked meats, and to cheer on the Name-givers condemned through no act of their own to fight to the death. Large sums of silver change hands with every bout, and frequently more fighting occurs outside the pit than inside when gambling winnings are disputed. In the confusion of the nightly brawls, more than one old score has been settled. Most Barsaivians should find these places repellant enough to avoid out of good taste. Those who do not quite probably deserve the fate that awaits them.

Where there are sailors and other transient workers, there are gaming halls. Dockside is full of places to lose your money, and quite possibly your life. Winning is difficult enough, considering how often the games are fixed. Escaping with your silver is another challenge. Some of the halls do not take kindly to people beating the house. Their proprietary attitude toward money that enters the premises may come with an edge. Others are haunted by thieves who lay in wait down the street for successful gamblers. If you're looking to meet some very rough people who will gladly administer a beating for a few silver, and make a body disappear for a gold or two, then by all means the beer-soaked and smoky dens of Dockside are for you. If you seek games of chance and skill in a pleasant atmosphere, where you may actually see the next morning with your winnings and health intact, then take yourself to Cliffside.

## Cliffside

Cliffside finds itself caught between the rough brawling of Dockside and the refined airs of the Caldera. Many of its more elegant inns, near the Cliff, must cater to lesser nobility en route from one end of the city to the other, or to visiting officials who for one reason or the other do not stay in the Caldera. The free servants of these people are quite likely to have similarly refined tastes in entertainment, and quite possibly the silver to indulge themselves at least mildly. At the other end, by Dockside, the atmosphere is rougher, although not nearly so bad as down by the piers. Out in the fringes of Cliffside, near the slave market, are a few pit fighting establishments. While Dockside must cater to the tastes of sailors on leave, Cliffside has no such excuse.

Cliffside enjoys a higher percentage of Troubadour adepts than Dockside, although not so many nor of as high a Circle as the Caldera. Dockside does not have a playhouse, where Cliffside has one and a troupe of puppeteers who frequent the Dry Market, setting up their booth more or less in the same place each day as traffic permits.

Games of chance are nearly as popular in Cliffside as they are down in Dockside. The traveler who wants to try his hand at jongleur or blind raider will find a better crowd here, composed mostly of craftsfolk and the occasional merchant. The stakes tend to be higher, in silver and even gold rather than the copper-ante games of the Dockside gambling dens. Surviving to get home with your winnings is a less risky proposition here, as most gaming halls in Cliffside will have a guard presence, as well as mercenaries of reasonable trustworthiness for short-term hire.



## Yellow Flag Players

A loose coalition of actors, activists and rabble-rousers, the Yellow Flag Players take their name from the saffron banner that flies atop their playhouse on days when they take the stage. Normally, two works are presented, the first being a classic work of popular appeal, and the other being a political commentary thinly masked as a comedy. City officials are a favorite target, residing in the Tower of Power, a structure wider at the pinnacle than the base that invariably comes crashing down at the end from the bad decisions of those at the top.

One can only surmise that Xatuman Injitoa, the chief playwright and lead actor of the Players, is well connected somewhere, otherwise his insistence on portraying Governor Miklos as a petulant, wheedling fool would surely result in his disappearance one dark night. The popular works given first billing are usually adventure stories, filled with swordplay and magic, often based (very loosely) on the actual exploits of noted Theran adepts, and much more likely to have been overheard in a bar than read from their journals.

## Gambling Houses

While still not the genteel homes of games of chance that can be found down in the Caldera, the gambling houses of Cliffside are in general a vast improvement over the grimy dens of Dockside. Clean, decently ventilated so that the smoke does not build up, and carrying a good selection of ales, wines and preserved foods, they provide a far more preferable atmosphere in which to concentrate on the next roll of the dice or turn of the cards. The two most popular games here are *jongleur*, in which the objective is to accumulate cards with a face value totaling as close to thirteen without going over, and *blind raider*, a dice game in which bluffing is more important than the actual roll. I spent a night playing *blind raider*, and found swiftly that reading the expressions of the players, and choosing

one's seat with care, are vital to success. Each player at the table antes a coin, usually a silver in Cliffside. Five dice are dropped into an empty tankard, then the tankard is upended on the table, covering the dice. The current player peers at the dice, shielding them from view of the others with the tankard and his hand. The player then slides the tankard, with the dice under it, to the player to his left, and announces the result of his roll. The receiving player has to make a choice. If he believes the first player, he looks under the tankard, shielding the dice from view of the others. He may then take dice out from under the tankard if he desires, but must roll at least one die and pass the dice to the next player, claiming to have made a roll that beats what he himself was passed. If the receiving player does not believe the passing player, he picks the tankard straight up, exposing the dice. If the claimed roll is present, the passing player wins the coins on the table, but if the claim is proven false, the receiving player gets the stakes. Each time the tankard is passed, both players involved toss in a coin. With a series of successful bluffs, the table stakes can rise quite swiftly, the more so if the ante is silver and the bet gold.

Of the houses in Cliffside, the Purple Feather at the south end of the Dry Market, Rolling Wheels at the Dockside end of the Dockway and the Silk Albatross behind the Blue Dwarf enjoy the best reputations. Their ale is unwatered, their dice regularly checked for tampering and tasked spirits kept on watch for magical interventions. As usual, a few sell-swords hang about, making themselves available as temporary bodyguards for anyone winning large. I would advise travelers to avoid the dice-houses at the fringes of Cliffside, as their squalid conditions are the least of their problems. Some of these mean, smoky establishments are little better than the dens of Dockside.

## Tea Houses

Not to be confused with the genteel,



upper-class tearooms of Ardatha, Galedon's tea houses are lively, bustling places, more like taverns. Generally open to the street along their front wall, instead of ale these places serve tea made by boiling powdered tea-leaves with honey and the spicy seeds of a native Creanan tree, producing a thick, sweet yet bitter brew with a peculiar taste that only the natives truly love. People gather in these places to discuss business, argue philosophy, eat and drink and simply enjoy each other's company. Poets, singers, storytellers and jugglers wander in, or come by at set times, picking up silver and a free

meal if they're good enough. With conversations stimulated by the potent brew, the mood frequently grows lively, with colorful insults exchanged over the slightest disagreement. Somehow, though, fights rarely break out, the customers keeping their conflicts down to the occasional shouting match. Perhaps Garlen has laid a blessing on these places, or perhaps simply the absence of strong drink keeps the tea houses from turning violent the way taverns do. Whatever the reason, the tea houses are popular social venues at all hours of the day.

## The Caldera

Many of the more lavish entertainments enjoyed by denizens of the Caldera are held in private. While professional entertainers may be involved, the events are held in homes up in the White. Family anniversaries, such as the birthing-day of the heir of the House, require a sumptuous banquet to be held. The fortunes of the House are represented by the expense of the feast, and no House wants to appear pauperly, so entertainers of various sorts are brought in to divert the guests in between a full day of removes. Dishes are not so much eaten as admired and tasted, for to take more than a mouthful of any one would mean passing up an opportunity later on for lack of room. Even the largest troll would gain his fill, as each remove normally consists of four dishes, and a proper feast lasts for a full day, with two removes per hour. The more astute will notice the opportunity to make business deals while their negotiating opponents are satiated and in an expansive mood. There are rumors that the more devious will take advantage of the chance to eliminate their rivals while their defenses are lowered. It is considered bad form to bring a food-taster to a celebratory banquet. Conversely, it would be inappropriate for a guest to collapse from obvious poisoning, so that any move against a rival must take effect hours later.

The wealthier citizens stage mock hunts on the Flat, often at the southern edge of the Gardens of Tuleth. There, they meet to spend the day comparing their hawks, arranging breeding between the various lines, and occasionally loosing their birds after a target bird released from a cage. Most of the day passes in conversation, with business and political deals being informally made in between the small talk, as birds are groomed and light wines consumed.

The Gardens are also host, four times a year, to exhibitions of sculpture and painting. Artists from the city and its environs compete in lesser shows to win a place in the quarterly events. Prices commanded for pieces exhibited at the Gardens are high enough that an artist who makes a few sales can live quite comfortably for the next quarter year. Patronage is sometimes awarded by noble Houses whose representatives are suitably impressed by the work on display. Frequently, artists in search of a patron will target their work to a particular House, choosing as their theme a notable event from the House's past, to flatter their potential patron.

At least one in recent memory chose a different tack. Novgilmi Bentl, a dwarf painter of moderate repute, chose to exhibit a canvas portraying the defeat of House Narlanth at the hands of a minor Horror, a shameful event from before the Scourge. Whispers went through the crowd



at the unveiling, and few would stand close to the next day by House Qelirc, a long-time rival of Narlanth in magery circles. His masterwork, a mural of Qelirc's founders in the front hall of the House's manor, sadly remains unfinished, Bentl having been found dead two weeks later in the arms of a prostitute.

### **Iadan's Baths**

On the north-western shore of Lake Tunisie, at the inflow of the River Seitz, stands a complex of bath-houses, entertainment halls, bars, gardens and steam-chambers, collectively under the Name of Iadan's Baths. From a lengthy interview with the owner, a portly dwarf who will speak for hours about his establishment, I gathered that the Baths originated well before the Scourge as simply a bathing-house. Many of the homes in the Caldera did not, and some still do not, have indoor plumbing, with water being propelled by tasked elementals through pipes to the wealthier regions. To bathe, water either had to be carried up to the houses, or the residents had to come down to the lake. Gersde Iadan's ancestor, many generations removed, built the original bath-house to provide a private environment for bathing, and to make a profit for himself and the soapmaker, oil and unguent merchant, and laundress with whom he was originally in partnership with. The associated concerns have long since been bought out by Gersde's line, and the original bath-house was torn down before the Scourge to make way for a larger and more elegant facility, but the Baths are still the central attraction of the facility.

Most clients do not come here merely to bathe, however, and some do not come to bathe at all, but to enjoy the associated entertainments. The gardens, while not the rival of Tuleth, are elegantly appointed and have many private alcoves for meetings or assignations. With the high quality of the minstrels Gersde hires to amuse his clientele, some go to the Baths for the show. Merchants bring clients to the Baths, hoping to strike a better deal in the relaxed atmosphere. It is said that more business, both of a private nature and of government,

goes on in the baths than in the Spire of Rule and the Markets. Once you have been scrubbed and oiled and massaged, and are relaxing in the hot springs or the steam chambers, agreement is much easier to reach.

### **The Market Players**

Gaining their name from the location of their playhouse, at the north end of the Caldera's Market, the Market Players focus on histories and complex tragedies with deep philosophical overtones. Many audience members retire to the tea-rooms and taverns across the road after each production to argue its meaning. The actors frequently join in, their interpretations often doing more to confuse the argument than to clarify.

The principal playwright, Uyuile Waliv, is a tall, slightly paunchy human with his mostly-grey hair caught back in a loose ponytail and a scraggly drooping mustache, who breaks with tradition by staying off the stage. He manages the theater's accounts, directs the productions, handles subscriptions and the hiring of bill-posters and criers for advertisement, and writes most of the troupe's original works. Most mornings find him lounging on the balcony over the theatre's public entrance, sipping kokulac from a green ceramic tankard and watching the crowds go by as he ponders his latest work. Through his business connections, he knows most of the arts community in the Caldera, not only the actors but the carpenters, painters, limners, costumers and musicians vital to the entire production. Unfortunately, an introduction to a contact through him requires spending an hour or so listening to him describe his latest work and being probed for comments.





# CONCERNING THE POPULACE

Galedon's centuries of isolation from the mother of its culture resulted in notable differences. Its citizens are more subtle, more treacherous, more appreciative of sensual pleasures, a culture of hedonists who eliminate their enemies with multi-component poison at a feast instead of political maneuverings. Even among the non-elves, every conversation, every word has multiple levels, with insults, threats and deals flashing like steel under the cover of polite repartee.

## Daily Life

As in every city, the location, environment and makeup of the populace place restrictions on the way of life, and encourage certain trends. Galedon's predominantly hot, humid weather and the influences of Thera, Indrisa and Creana have given the city a set of customs and a style that is uniquely Galedonian.

### Homes and Requirements of Living

Homes in Galedon, especially in the steamy environment of the Caldera, have high ceilings and large windows to deal with the hot climate. The wealthier families employ elementalists to provide tasked air elementals for cooling and keeping the air circulating. Insect netting is draped over the beds and across the windows. Window netting has a looser weave to allow air to pass through, while bed netting is made with a tighter weave to keep out small insects. With the tropical climate inside the Caldera, insect repellants and bite unguents are a necessity. Many people in Highslope die of insect bites because they can't afford the herbal preparations.

Galedonians who can spare a few silver keep at least one fly jar in their home. The more wealthy will have one in every room. Fly jars are made of glass, with a broad opening at the top, stopped with a large, flat cork, and a funnel-like opening in the bottom that reaches up into the interior of the jar. In making the jar, the glassblower starts by making a wide, squat jar, then cuts a small circle out of the bottom. He then heats the glass again, and forces the jar down over a cone-shaped form, stretching the glass of the bottom of the jar inward into a funnel shape, but leaving a ring at the base. Four or five

small blobs of glass are then added to make short legs, to hold the bottom of the jar a finger's width above the surface it rests upon. To use the jar, the cork is removed, and honey or other sweet liquid is drizzled into the ring-shaped bottom, then the cork is replaced and the jar left out where flies can easily find it. The sweet liquid lures the insects up into the jar, where many will become stuck in the bait. Others will not be able to find their way back out through the narrow inner opening of the funnel. Once or twice a day, the jar is cleaned out, the dead and dying insects removed, and the bait refreshed. This odious chore is generally given to the youngest child in households that do not have servants or slaves.

During the height of the insect season, from mid-spring through mid-fall, many of the inhabitants of the city, especially in the Caldera, go veiled to protect their faces. In a city already rife with intrigue, having the citizens go about with their faces hidden for half the year only adds to the air of mystery. While a few Name-givers have attempted to make use of this for nefarious purposes, they have quickly discovered that the watch can recognize someone from a partial view of a face, a view through a veil, or even from body shape and the way the person walks when their face is completely obscured.



## **Symbols of Hospitality**

When I first arrived in the city, I was mystified by the profusion of small spheres displayed on doorframes and overhead on the lintels. Some of the inns even had the sphere, painted in vivid orange tones, on the corner of their sign. I have never been one to hold back my curiosity, especially where customs peculiar to a region are concerned. I paused at a Cliffside tavern to refresh myself and my guards on our way from the docks to our eventual lodgings in the Caldera. There, over an ale of refreshing coldness, the innkeeper explained the symbol.

"What it is, is exactly what it appears to be," he said. "It is an orange."

"The fruit?" I asked, wondering why the city seemed to have a fascination with such a bitter morsel.

"Ah," he said, "you have never eaten one of our blood oranges." So saying, he drew a wooden bowl of large orange-red globes from under the counter, and proffered one to me. I suppose my reluctance to consume anything with blood in its name, especially in the Theran Empire, its citizens reputed to practice all sorts of fell magics, must have shown plainly upon my face. He laughed, and, taking his knife from its place on his hip, split the orange upon a plate and slid it over before me.

The name became a bit more clear, as the pulp was a vivid red. The juice that puddled about the split halves was likewise carmine, but transparent and not the opaque of Name-giver blood. I steeled myself, picked up one of the halves and bit into it.

The shock of the intense sweetness, when I had expected something sour and bitter, set me aback. I had to suck quickly at the piece to keep the juice from dripping into my beard. This was as far from the few dried-up specimens I had encountered in Vivane as I was from the mountains of Throal. I confess that I finished off the half in no time,

slurping greedily at the refreshing pulp as it cut the road dust from my throat better than the ale that sat forgotten in my tankard.

"Now you understand," said the innkeeper. "Many years ago, when the city was new, one of the wealthier merchants, it matters not his House, learned the secret of cultivating these oranges from the native farmers. He began offering the fruit to all visitors to his home, to take the taste of the road from their mouths and begin each deal with sweetness. His business prospered well, and people who had dealt with him took up the custom themselves. After a generation or two, the blood orange became the symbol of hospitality in our city. Wherever you see the orange, beyond the door lies a welcome. In the homes of anyone who can afford a few, an orange is still offered to guests as they arrive. That'll be two coppers," he concluded, noting that I had finished the other half as he spoke.

## **Death and the Dead**

Each section of Galedon has its own way of dealing with the dead. Not all races bury their dead, and those that do differ from each other in their burial customs. The handlers of the dead must be trained in many different funeral customs to handle the cosmopolitan population. This section will not cover the basic customs of the Name-giver races, as those are documented well enough elsewhere. Local variations, however, deserve mention, and a detailed exploration of the differences forced upon the populace by the city's environment is in order.

The primary concern is the weather. Galedon is located far south of Barsaive, in a region with very little cold weather. While this brings in two crops every year, it causes trouble with disposal of the dead. Bodies have to be dealt with quickly. With the city existing right at the edge of the straits, the water table is just below the surface throughout much of the land. Graves are simply not possible in Dockside or Cliffside; when the spring and fall rains come, the coffins would float right up out of the



ground. The two cemeteries the city has are on the outer slopes of the Caldera, which keeps them above the water table but puts them on stony ground, with large expanses of bare rock. Mausoleums and aboveground crypts are the rule for burial of the dead. The city's t'skrang population are a notable exception to this rule, as they maintain their graves at the bottom of the strait.

Many of the Name-givers here have adopted the funeral pyre. The proximity of Indrisa, where burning is the normal means of disposal of the dead, may have provided an influence. It also precludes one's favorite uncle landing in the hands of the nethermancers. Thankfully, the natives of Galedon have not picked up the Indrisan custom of the bereaved spouse flinging themselves into the pyre of their loved one, which, while I suppose does show the depth of devotion, leaves the House with one less claimant to the estate, and possibly as such is encouraged by the families. Removing the person closest to the deceased from the picture could only work to the advantage of the House's enemies in the tense political

atmosphere of the Caldera.

In Dockside and Cliffside, the honeycart drivers pick up the dead from the streets when they pick up the chamberpots. People who have the misfortune to die destitute and homeless end up dumped into the straits south of the city along with the rest of the honeycart load. There generally being no homeless in the Caldera, thanks to the barrier of the Cut and the efforts of the watch, those few denizens of Highslope who die away from their homes are generally taken care of by the undertakers' apprentices for the practice. The apprentices are also sought for some Highslope residents who die at home, as, like all apprentices, they are terribly underpaid. For a few silver, they'll take the body away and make sure that it ends up in the base of someone else's pyre or in an unmarked grave in the pauper's field. If no one claims a body or provides for it, the city's nethermancers may legally take it away for their own use, a statute which seems to encourage the proper disposal of the dead.



## PERSONALITIES OF NOTE

As with all large and aged cities, Galedon maintains a bounty of individuals that require attention. I have included the namegivers of I felt were of note, where they might be found, and that which makes them noteworthy.

### Dockside Personalities

#### Amombda Munirathinam

An elderly Indrisan troll, with dark skin and his horns inlaid with gold wire, Amombda is a striking enough figure on his own. The brightly-colored Indrisan robes he wears, purple and red with vivid embroidery, make him absolutely impossible to miss. Formerly traveling with a merchant caravan that plied the overland route between Galedon and his homeland, he finally grew too old to continue making the journey, and

settled in Galedon rather than back in Indrisa. Why, I do not know; I would prefer to spend my old age in my homeland, surrounded by my family and the people and places I grew up with. Amombda does not answer questions about himself for the most part, staring tiredly at the questioner as if he'd been asked what color the sky is by a persistent child.

He lives in a ground-floor apartment at the back of a cloth merchant's shop down by



the Fishmarket, and when not seeing patients spends his days at the Green Goose, a tavern at the south end of the Market, sitting at an outside table near the door. I tried the usual tactic of buying him an ale, but he declined to be interviewed, so I learned very little about him. He did remark that he sits at that table so that he can watch the world go by. After many decades of travel, he is content to stand still and let the world move around him.

Amombda still works as a healer, seeing to the injuries and illnesses of the Fishmarket's vendors and workers. Much of his pay is taken out in barter, food, herbs, even furnishings for his apartment. Coin is something of a rarity for him, and gets his attention quite well. For the right amount of silver, it's said, and the right approach, he'll take care of all sorts of injuries discreetly, including ones that are supposed to be reported to the watch. I do not know if this is true, but I do know that he seems to have the usual caravan trader's disregard for the watch. After spending most of his life out in the wilds where the only security is what you provide for yourself, he has little respect for people who need someone else to protect them, or for the protectors themselves. A troll should stand on his own two feet, he said to me, and carry his own weapons. I took note of the staff leaning against the wall next to him, easily as thick as my wrist, and the fact that he did not seem lame enough to require it for walking, and held my silence.

### **Anir Taugknol**

A human woman of Creanan origin, Anir moved to Galedon over two decades ago. Formerly a caravan trader, Anir saw a business opportunity in independent warehousing. While all of the large trading concerns had their own facilities, the increasing number of unaffiliated cargo vessels and merchants were having trouble finding warehouse space. Their loads were normally too small to take up an entire warehouse, and the then-current owners simply didn't want to deal with anyone

working on that small scale. Anir bought a warehouse down by the swamps, and subdivided it internally into a dozen chambers, each with its own door and lock. She then leased out each room to a different merchant, some for a brief time, some for a longer term. When all of the rooms were booked solid for the next half year, she bought another warehouse. Now she owns a block of warehouses down by the swamps, another up by the Fishmarket, and two similar blocks in Cliffside. Her facilities have been used by more than merchants. Families store their belongings when moving from one home to another. Artists have used the space to hold completed works preparatory to exhibitions. Teams of adepts have even leased space on a short term to hold their larger gear while visiting Thera. With all of this business, occasionally a customer places something illicit or dangerous in storage. Anir has had to deal with the watch more than once when contraband was traced to one of her warehouses. Three times in the past year alone, she has had to send her b'jados to resolve the situation when a dangerous artifact was discovered in one of her rooms. While her service guarantees security of goods placed in her warehouses, it does not guarantee privacy, as the warehouse owner could be held responsible for damages from the warehouse's contents.

### **Tafen the Black**

Not a person one would usually take notice of, but nevertheless occupying an important position, Tafen is one of the ratcatchers working the docks and their environs. Called the Black, I believe, because of the layers of ground-in grime that encrust his clothes and skin, Tafen is a dwarf of strongly antisocial mien who gets along much better with the half-dozen terriers who form his troops than with his fellow Name-givers. He and his dogs may be seen poking around the warehouses, prowling underneath the docks and roaming the alleys of Dockside in search of their prey, the oversized rats brought into the city by the constant flow of waterborne traffic. There is



nothing quite so cunning and vicious as a ship's rat, except for the dogs that hunt them. Stocky but narrow of shoulder and long of muzzle, these dogs can fit through many of the same holes the rats themselves use, and once they lay hold of their prey, they do not unlock their jaws until their master commands so. Tafen is one of the few people with the patience and stubbornness to train these dogs and work daily with them, being more tenacious than his charges.

I have seen Tafen on board more than one ship, newly arrived and lying off the piers out in the harbor. I surmise that the captain, being aware of a stronger than usual rat presence aboard his vessel and not wanting to pay fines for bringing pests into the city, had hired the ratcatcher to thin out the population before he took a slip and had his ship inspected by the harbor patrol. Such a position, while rendering one odious to society, would afford a number of opportunities to see and hear things that otherwise would go undiscovered. Not only that, but it would not surprise me if, when going out to a ship lying at anchor in the harbor, or coming back, the ratcatcher had more in his sacks than dead rats. Expensive things are smuggled in small packages.

### **Urfonius Nuodai**

An aging t'skrang woman with a taste for heavy gold jewelry and loud red and orange robes, Urfonius has been the official Wizard to the Harbormaster for the last thirty years. She's seen several administrations in the office she serves, but like so many career bureaucrats occupies a niche that could not easily be filled if she left. It helps that she's thoroughly competent at her job. Overseeing the magical defenses of the Sundial, researching potential magical problems, and checking the docks for Horror taint or other astral irregularities takes up a good deal of her day. Beyond that, there's never a day without some sort of crisis to toss her schedule right out the nearest porthole. Despite the demands and the long hours, though, Urfonius manages to keep a sort of

cynical humor, a grandmotherly blend of caring and asperity. She regards the Docks as her home, treating everyone there with maternal care -- which occasionally means setting things to right and dealing with unruly children. Marching resolutely into the fray, Urfonius has been known to use her staff for more than conjuring and support to get people to see things her way. Incidentally, her Name comes from a song that was popular when her egg-parent was a youngling, which explains why a t'skrang would be called by such a dwarfen appellation. Apparently her egg-parent hoped that she would turn out male.

### **Ynyz Ranlodea**

A quiet, impassive elven man of unremarkable appearance, Ynyz makes his living ostensibly as an independent cargo broker, buying up goods brought in by speculative captains and making his profits by finding a market for the goods. This allows him to inspect many of the arriving ships' cargo holds before anything is offloaded, a vital function to his true purpose. Like most fanatics, he'll speak volubly of his obsession when asked the right questions.

Ynyz is the leader of the Sands of Destruction, a living legend cult searching for Dis's Hourglass, an ancient artifact of unimaginable power. According to the tales, the hourglass, nearly two feet tall and made of untarnishable brass and indestructible crystal, belonged to the Passion Erendis, but was lost during the Scourge when the Passion changed. Now that Dis is one of the patron Passions of Thera, many people are searching for the hourglass. Its powers supposedly include the ability to enslave the minds of many Name-givers at a time, to keep slaves working after death, and to force Name-givers to exert all of their physical potential in a single act, performing far beyond the capabilities of their race but dying in the process.



According to the cult, it is in the nature of the hourglass to migrate, to move from one person to another, seeking its true owner. With the Passion changed from the Scourge, the hourglass is doomed to wander forever, or until the Passion recovers its pre-Scourge identity. Since Dis is one of the patrons of Thera, it is reasonable to expect the hourglass to try to make its way to the Golden Isle. The Sands of Destruction have placed agents in all of the cities that trade directly with Thera, in the hope of spotting the hourglass passing through and intercepting it. There may also be members of the Sands of Destruction roaming the lands, searching for the hourglass, and within the Theran intelligence community, in case the artifact does not travel through normal channels.

The cult, however, is not trying to take the hourglass to Thera, but instead is trying to prevent it from reaching the Golden Isle. An ancient document in the possession of the Sands of Destruction bears a legend telling of how, if the hourglass arrived on Thera and the sands were to subsequently run out, a great disaster would befall the island. The cult believes itself to be the only defense standing between Thera and total destruction.

## Cliffside Personalities

### Bouziar F'nat

A teamster and caravan organizer, Bouziar started just a few years ago as a driver for one of the mercantile houses that sends caravans across the overland trade routes toward Indrisa and Cathay. The sturdy ork woman rose quickly, even aggressively, in the company, and just recently founded her own business. Given a budget, she'll put together a caravan, hiring guards and drivers, buying supplies, inspecting wagons if the client provides them and purchasing them if not, and planning the best route for the journey.

How exactly the cult expects to hold on to such an item, that finds its way into new ownership whenever its travels are interrupted, I was unable to ascertain.

### Yemata Elnar

An attractive, graceful dwarf woman unfortunately not interested in scholarly types, Yemata earns her silver from the passing crowds in Dockside. Singing, dancing, playing several instruments, juggling, telling stories and performing sleight of hand tricks, she puts on a highly diverse show, pulling in a good deal of coin. One of Granny Ochlocknee's favorites, Yemata is well regarded in Dockside entertainer circles. She also has many connections on the streets, preferring to move about rather than claiming any one corner as her own. I am quite certain, considering the sharp eyes both the watch and the Harbor Patrol keep on her, that entertainment is not her only business, but it is impolite to enquire of someone whether or not they are a Thief adept. What I can relate for certain is that for the right coin, she seems able to provide introductions to just about anyone, or find most anything if it exists in Dockside. Rumor has it that Granny Ochlocknee has already chosen Yemata as her successor.

Twice a year, she makes the trip herself, leading a caravan and checking out the route in person. Thus far, she's made a reasonable living and has yet to lose a train to bandits or natural hazards.

### V'nesi Qethengeb

A troll architect from Marac, V'nesi came to the city by herself ten years ago expecting to oversee a single project and return home within a year. When her designs were chosen by House Qelirc for their Cliffside business concerns, V'nesi brought her entire



household to Galedon, all four husbands, two ancillary wives, seventeen children, dogs, horses and household furnishings. When not at her drafting table, a massive slab of hardwood that requires four adult trolls to move it, she can be found on-site at any of three or four construction projects she has going at a time, supervising the work and lending a hand where either great strength or a delicate touch are required. With coordination worthy of a jeweler, she can trace out the smallest details in her building plans, or fit a decorative molding into a tight corner without putting so much as a nick in the wood. V'nesi knows discreet ways into and out of many buildings, not only in Cliffside but throughout the city, since she drew the plans for some, supervised the construction of others, and speaks regularly with Galedon's other architects. Gracious, well-spoken and fluent in six languages, V'nesi plays the game of Galedonian politics well, earning commissions not only from her Qelirc patrons but from other Houses as well. Her massive form, draped in layers of off-white cotton in the northern Maracian style, is a familiar sight at social gatherings in the Caldera and the wealthier regions of Cliffside.

### **Sivr Caeavitz**

A tall, rangy elven man with dusty brown hair cut short for convenience, Sivr is one of several animal breeders making their living providing mounts and draft beasts for the many caravans that travel to and from Galedon. Sivr specializes in horses, raising two primary breeds. The first, a lean, long-legged variety with a bay or chestnut coat, originating from the hot, dry lands to the southeast, is highly intelligent, swift, and courageous, making good mounts for cavalrymen adepts as well as for the non-adept rider. The other is deep of chest and broad of shoulder, with a dark grey or dun coat, and comes from stock imported from Vasgothia. They work well in teams, being calm and tolerant of temper, and are sold for pulling caravans and cargo wagons. The actual breeding and training of the horses is

done on a farm south of the Caldera. Sivr maintains a residence and stockade in southern Cliffside to transact business. He's only there himself one day out of the week, to supervise the transfer of stock from the ranch, see to the health of his animals and close any large or important deals. For the rest of the time, his staff takes care of business for him. An inquiry from an adept, however, will bring him into the city within a day, to ensure that the adept is matched up with the best possible mount for his or her needs. His animals consume his entire attention. While it is said that he can identify any beast in his stable, walking away from him at night in the rain, he calls all of his stable hands Genseth because he can't remember their Names.

### **Tinirt Tasaoketmedi**

One of the less social inhabitants of Cliffside, I nonetheless found Tinirt to be intriguing enough to at least temporarily forgive her eccentricities. A thin, nervous human woman of Creanan descent who habitually dresses in shabby leathers and shaves her head for health considerations, Tinirt is a falconer in the employ of Public Works, charged with keeping down the city's bird population. As such, she spends most of her time prowling the rooftops of Cliffside, loosing her falcons after the gulls and sparrows that nest in the eaves and gutters. Her lofty existence, literally above the concerns of most of the populace, lack of Name-giver companionship and close identification with her birds have estranged her from Galedonian culture. Her movements are quick and abrupt, her speech halting, and her manner predatory yet nervous, tending to move rapidly away from anything that she cannot seize and control. She is difficult to approach and more so to speak with, yet she knows more of Cliffside than most people would think. From her perch, she overhears conversations, sees activities, and knows how to get atop every building north of the Dockway. I can only assume that either she has connections with certain organizations or has been



disregarded as too strange to be a threat, given the scope and degree of her knowledge. Without such, she surely would have been eliminated as a potential hazard long ago, in the intrigue-ridden atmosphere of Galedon.

### **Zito Delubroha**

One of the few obsidimen who live in Galedon, Zito is a carpenter who specializes in building caravan wagons. Anyone can put together a flatbed wagon for hauling cargo. It takes a highly skilled artisan to design and build a true caravan, a home on wheels that reduces the task of making camp to parking the wagons, building a fire and seeing to the animals. While the construction of such a wagon takes several months, the wait is worthwhile. Zito's caravans make use of every bit of space, wedging in storage into every corner that isn't taken up by bunks, counters for workspace and the cast-iron stove. The windows and doors are of the same quality used in building houses. Leaf-spring suspension smooths the ride, so that the dishes in the cupboards are still intact and usable at the end of the day's travel. Zito paints his caravans in bright colors, with highly detailed decorations around the doors, windows and the edge of the roof inside and out. Spare wheels and hardware are provided with every new caravan wagon as part of the package.

Rumor has it that some of the storage spaces are not obvious, to allow for hiding valuables from brigands. Of course, using

such hidden storage compartments for taking items past the city watch and the tax assessors would be against the law. Zito is an honest craftsman and will advise his customers against such plans.

### **Rinrae Dheil**

A Court Advocate, Rinrae pleads the causes of those accused of crimes before the courts of the city. With a careful balance between calm logic and impassioned argument, she negotiates settlements, seeks the truth with diligence and fights for the exoneration of the innocent. While not a Questor of Mynbruje, she certainly considers herself an acolyte of the Passion, constantly reminding the courts that justice must be tempered with mercy. The slim, attractive elven woman lost her right leg in an accident years ago, a conflict with a wagon that ran off the Dockway or so I am told. She walks with the aid of a crutch, which she has not hesitated to use in court as an attention-getting device, having more than once deliberately dropped it noisily to the floor during a crucial moment in the prosecutor's argument, disrupting her opponent's train of thought to her gain. If you find yourself in a disagreement with the watch over the actual course of events, and are required to explain your point of view in court, and you have the silver to afford her fees, which can range as high as a hundred silver a day in a capital case, then by all means you will want someone of Rinrae's skill, if not Rinrae herself, speaking on your behalf.

## **The Caldera Personalities**

### **Lirriniuk Silverstrings**

An ork of House Zanjan who showed an early interest in music far greater than his line's prowess at weapons, Lirriniuk is one of the few members of his family not marching with the Sword of the Golden Isle. A troubadour adept, his nickname comes from the harp he carries, strung with silver alloy

instead of the more usual nickel or gut. The harp was commissioned for him by the Eighth Legion, in gratitude for his composition, The Siege of Ahrmani, memorializing the six-month campaign in northern Indrisa. Lirriniuk's powerful words and stirring music bring home the heroism, desperation and determination of both sides in that epic siege to even the least martial of



Name-givers. Rumor has it that the harp was made by an elementalist, and may have various powers. I have been unable to confirm or deny any of the tales, so will not repeat them here.

Formerly the bard laureate of the Eighth Legion, Lirriniuk has moved to Galedon and taken up residence in the Caldera. He spends much of his time at the military base north of the city, gathering tales from the soldiers stationed there and weaving new ballads of heroic martial accomplishments. Far from being only a military bard, however, Lirriniuk is quite capable of performing at any occasion, having a wide repertoire of love songs, dances, historical ballads and Name-songs of various Houses. The passion with which he sings keeps him in demand for performances in the Caldera and elsewhere.

Lirriniuk has the tall, powerful build of the orks of his House, but lacks the intense muscular development of a warrior. He oils his hair and beard and curls them in tiny ringlets, keeping his beard trimmed up off his chest but allowing his hair to fall loose to the middle of his back. His skin is dark and his eyes black, like many of the orks of the region. He prefers silks, bright jewel tones for his shirts and darker earth colors for his breeches, and affects a pair of military-issue mountain boots. His scimitar, while jeweled heavily, is still quite serviceable, and I am told that while he is no adept of the blade, he is nonetheless highly skilled in its use.

### **Deevtreceen Avtor**

A midwife who works in Highslope, Deevtreceen is from the Avtor watchclan. She grew tired of her family complaining about the bad area they were stuck in, and decided to do something with her life to make it better. Apprenticing to a Downslope healer at an early age, she began practicing in Highslope as soon as she made journeyman, moving to the area when she attained mastery. While she barely scrapes by, with patients who more often than not cannot afford to pay her, and those who can paying

her in kind rather than in silver, she manages well enough to reduce the number of women dying in childbirth by a significant margin. She doubles as a healer to the area's children, treating their illnesses and injuries when she can, and calling in favors in the Name of Garlen from healers in the Upper when she must. Her activities have gained the notice of a few minor nobles, who are concerned with the rise in population in Highslope. While it does mean having more workers available eventually for the low-paying positions normally filled by Highslope residents, there is also the potential of increased unrest to consider. With more infants surviving, there will be more mouths to feed, and more strain on the limited incomes of Highslope. Hunger breeds discontent. If the White decides that good health care could destabilize its relationship with Highslope, an accident could easily fall Deevtreceen one dark night.

### **Gesmeth Arundian**

I fail to understand how someone could distance himself so far from his business as to lead a happy, contented life paid for by the sale of Name-givers. Qualification of such a person as a nobleman is irksome, as there is nothing noble about the commerce of the slave trade, but Gesmeth is of House Qelirc, and high in its ranks. He carries himself as proudly as if he dealt in jewels or precious metals, as well he might. Thera society, after all, treats slaves as a valuable commodity, a resource to be exploited. The fact that the nobility of Thera sees nothing wrong with a man earning gold from the flesh and blood of his fellow Name-givers points to much that is wrong with their society. Objectivity be damned. This person engages in a loathsome pursuit, and yet comports himself without shame, moving among the cream of his culture as if he belonged, which, by the beliefs of that culture, he does. His existence, and the respect he is accorded, shocks me to the marrow, and I cannot hold back my beliefs from my pen.



The slave trader is a tall human of graceful carriage, more like an elf in his ways and his dress than a member of his own race. His hair is a light brown, his eyes green, and his skin pale, making him stand out in this city of dark-skinned humans. His robes are always of the latest style. Working through a series of subordinates, apparently Gesmeth rarely visits the slave markets himself, only putting in an appearance when an exceptional Name-giver is offered for sale, and to look over the accounts. I suppose that keeping the dust and stench of the markets out of his nostrils helps him keep his conscience clear.

When he does make a public appearance, he is surrounded by four armed guards, eight if he leaves the Caldera, all of them either fiercely loyal to him for some unknown reason, or more likely enspelled, their wills enslaved and dedicated to his protection. Whatever the truth, his guards will certainly put themselves in the way of a weapon aimed at their master without hesitation. In Vivane, I heard a rumor of a spider that can spin a thread to a person's soul. Perhaps Gesmeth holds the threads. I can think of no good reason to be so committed to protecting a man who deals in lives.

### **Gemedi Tioymtiu**

A particularly tall and slim example of elven stock, Gemedi is a professional revel organizer. For a fee, she puts together social events, arranging food and drink hiring musicians and other entertainers, sending out the invitations, and seeing that the site is decorated appropriately. Considering that she keeps very close track of who's sleeping with whom, who has old feuds and new arguments, and who would like to have an opportunity to speak with someone else under the guise of a feast or dance, her events are always interesting in many senses of the word. Rumor has it that some people have retained her for her knowledge alone, paying to know details of relationships. This has not been substantiated, and if it were, such an indiscretion could harm her

business. I was indirectly warned against trying to prove such accusations, or pursuing such rumors, by a very well-dressed and well-mannered ork woman with a jewel-hilted sword on her hip. Not wishing to be permanently disinvited to Gemedi's parties, I left off my inquiries.

### **Usriel Iylentyn**

While not the best goldsmith in the Caldera, Usriel is highly competent at his craft. A dark-haired elf of unprepossessing mien, he seems most comfortable fussing over a delicate wax sculpture, or forging small amounts of gold into elegant jewelry. His journeymen, Olyntos, another elf, and Kabaz, an ork, do most of the haggling with customers, with Usriel contenting himself with the occasional quiet comment about the piece being bargained for. With his shop close to the Cut, Usriel does a thriving business selling small items to Name-givers on their way to see a loved one or a lover. He keeps a generous stock of rings, bracelets, necklaces, earrings and such sized to fit all of the Name-giver races.

Usriel also buys jewelry, gems and raw gold. I stopped by his shop after a recommendation from a member of the Geographical Society, and received a fair price for one of the jewels I carry in lieu of coin. He took me into the back of the shop, asked very few questions about the origin of the gem, and came to an offer swiftly. A brief exchange of counter-offers later, I strolled out of the shop with a purse full of Theran gold, much easier to spend than a jewel. Usriel affirmed, somewhat indirectly, that he'd be willing to exchange coin as well, giving value for weight of foreign currency. As I'm well out of Throalic silver at this time, I saw no point in pursuing the possibility, but thought it worth noting down for fellow travelers.

### **Wiyeked Dostaighn**

Yet another slender, elegant Theran woman (surely they must use some type of



magic to accomplish such a sameness of body), this time of human stock, Wiyeked owns a perfumery in Lower Trades, on the north slope directly below the Flame. Somehow, she manages to balance out the scents wafting from her establishment so that they always present a harmonious and not overpowering blend. Soft-spoken and reserved, she discusses her work in an oblique fashion, rarely referring to herself or her client, but instead directing her speech and gaze to the scent at hand. Such a diffident air makes me wonder what she has to hide, or what attention she is trying to avoid. With a stock of essential oils that is in

high demand in the White, and a product that is applied directly to the skin, one might suspect a link to certain organizations that would be interested in adding substances to specific bottles. I hesitate to make any direct accusation, as the visitors coming to her back door in the middle of the night could simply be purchasing scents for illicit lovers, doing their shopping at such an hour to try and keep their affairs secret. Certainly, if such a thing were going on, negotiations to set events in motion would have to be handled through third parties with great discretion.



## CONCERNING GOVERNMENT

The basic structure of government in Galedon is the same as in any Theran city, with an Imperial governor at the top, backed by the military, and an oligarchy of ministers between the governor and the bureaucracy. What makes Galedon different are the boards.

Lying below the ministers, but well above the general populace, the boards are committees that oversee various trades and pursuits, composed of followers of that pursuit. Each board is responsible for maintaining the standards of its trade or art, much like a guild, but without the apprenticeship training and fellowship of a guild. Boards are governing bodies that exist to wield power, no more, no less. Pursuing any board-governed career without the license granted by the board, which states that your skills are up to the standards set by the board and that you have paid all the appropriate taxes and licensing fees, can land you in the Imperial prison. Getting the training to develop the required level of skill is your own problem, not the board's. Because the boards are made up from the practitioners of the craft or art they govern, and the board selects its own replacement members whenever someone dies or leaves, each board represents a small dynasty. Nepotism is the rule rather than the exception, with families holding seats on a board for generations. Thanks to the Board of Magicians, for example, the Qelirc have been able to maintain a pre-eminent position for centuries, granting licenses to their House's elementalists much more readily than to the nethermancers of House Narlanth.

### Regarding Laws

Adepts visiting the city should be aware that Galedon has laws similar to Vivane regarding the open carrying of weaponry. Anything larger than a dagger is likely to invite an inquiry from the watch as to your intent. This law is not enforced uniformly across the city.

Down in Dockside, carting around an axe

across your back will earn you ample room to maneuver through the normally crowded streets, but as long as no blood is shed the watch is generally too busy to worry about weapons that are just being carried and not used.

Cliffside is a more respectable neighborhood. The watch there is much more



likely to ask questions of an armed Name-giver. Having weaponry permits, especially papers identifying the bearer as a licensed mercenary or bodyguard, will generally shorten the conversation.

## Regarding the Watch

Each region of the city has its own watch, with the commanders of each reporting to the central authority in the Caldera, and eventually answering to the governor. Some form of magical communications are obviously employed, as the central command can direct the watch in outlying areas in a crisis far too quickly for even the fleetest of runners to be involved. What exactly this is, I do not know, nor do I wish to lose the tip of my nose for poking it into the wrong place. The guards in Galedon are very close-mouthed, not amenable to being plied with strong ale and smooth words. While they are unfailingly polite (at least in the Caldera) until a law is broken, they maintain a professional reserve and a distance between themselves and the Name-givers they protect. From the tales on the streets, their families keep to themselves as well, with very few of their members either taking up any other profession or marrying outside the watch families. With this sort of clannishness, one could rationally expect any injury to a guard to develop with ease into a blood feud.

Down in Dockside, the watch wear boiled leather armor, the sergeants ring mail and the officers chain or plate mail. All members of the watch here wear a helm with a bright orange crest, making them immediately identifiable. Weapons are not completely standardized, each watchman allowed to use his or her own personal weapon in place of the city-provided one if he or she so chooses. Officers will normally carry swords, for appearance if for no other reason, although a few of them are swordmaster or warrior adepts. Sergeants carry a pike with a wicked hook off the back of the blade as a badge of

In the Caldera, anyone carrying weaponry who is not obviously acting as bodyguard for a nearby noble will be immediately arrested, escorted to the nearest watch post, and there grilled as to their purposes. Questioning is never done on the street in the Caldera.

office. Guards are issued a mace and shield, or a sword and either a parrying dagger or shield. The average watchman is either an ork or a large human, with some dwarfs and the occasional troll. I saw no watchmen who were elven or t'skrang, and did not expect to see either windlings or obsidimen among the watch for tolerably obvious reasons. Families include the Epelinyr, humans holding officer ranks for the past five hundred years; the Fotil, orks with a proud tradition of walking the streets for thirty generations; and the Ganj, one of the rare troll watchclans with more honors accorded them than some regiments in the Arm of Throal.

Cliffside's watch is more polite, more refined, and less rough than Dockside's, but then Cliffside's watch deals with tipsy merchants and cutpurse thieves, a far cry from drunken sailors and the cutthroats of Dockside's back alleys. More dwarfs and elves show up among the watch, and fewer orks and trolls, there not being enough strenuous fighting on duty to interest the former or require the latter. Armor and weapons are lighter, more elegant, less obtrusive. Watchmen on patrol look more like city guards and less like the militia out on maneuvers in the streets. The patrol sergeants still carry pikes, but without the hook and with a little bit of decorative carving along the shaft, a little chasing down the blade. Their helm crests are bright green, giving the appearance of a confluence of birds to a meeting between Cliffside and Dockside units on the borders of their jurisdiction. Watchclans in Cliffside include the Teusenveld, humans known in watchclan circles for an annual feast where they prepare entire carcasses by roasting them in pits in



the ground, basting the meat with a sauce of their own recipe; the Videfias, an elven family that has produced some of the finer swordmaster adepts in the officer ranks; and the Vaalt, an ork clan with more than the usual ability to control their gahad when dealing with an annoying civilian.

Down in the Caldera, armor is as much for appearance as protection. The would-be brigand quickly finds out, though, that the reflexes of the watch are as highly polished as their gear. Helm crests in the Caldera are a vivid blue, like that of the sea on a cloudless day. Many of the watch provide their own weapons, in order to have hilts with decorative work and brightly-dyed wrapping, scabbards embroidered with family emblems and protective spells, and blades chased with runes and ornate patterns. The pike of the watch-sergeant here is likely to carry a handful of bright blue feathers trailing from below the head, and to have a long, slender thrusting point, much more elegant than the massive hacking blades of the Cliffside and Dockside standard-issue weapons. Caldera watch officers come from well-placed families, and often attend the social functions of the aristocracy by invitation. While they do not normally marry into the ruling Houses, they are nonetheless considered a good match for the sons and daughters of high-ranking clans. Watchclans in the Caldera include Tathrbon, humans of nearly elven build who have patrolled Downslope and the Lower since the Caldera was founded; Epidrau, another human clan that started out as watchmen in the White, but rose to the officers thanks to careful maneuverings by the heads of the house over many years; and Avtor, a dwarf clan charged with enforcement in Highslope whose members have grown bitter over the centuries, stuck at the top of the Caldera in the poorest area while their fellows have enjoyed the benefits of life down on the lower slopes and the Flat.

The harbor patrol is a separate entity from the city watch, under the control of the Harbormaster. Their armor is leather, with very little metal due both to the weight and to the corrosive effects of salt air, and lined with cork for padding and buoyancy. They all carry pikes similar to that of a watch sergeant, with a hook like a gaff at the base of the blade, useful as a weapon and for fishing things out of the harbor. The harbor patrol travel in pairs, unlike the watch, but do their best to always remain within sight of another pair, so that reinforcements are never far away. While many of the harbor patrol are t'skrang, and thus not terribly concerned about survival in the water, they nevertheless dislike falling in, as it makes them look foolish and requires extensive cleaning of their gear afterward. Helms are not practical, especially for t'skrang, but most of the harbor patrol do wear a boiled leather cap for head protection, with a slit for the crest if the patrolman is a t'skrang, and dyed a bright yellow for high visibility in and around the water. For similar reasons, they wear bright orange vests over their armor, also worn by their pilots and boatmen. Claiming the harbor and its environs as their jurisdiction, the harbor patrol are frequently in dispute with the Dockside watch over territory and authority. More than one clever brigand has diverted attention from his activities by arranging for a unit of the watch to be lured into the path of the harbor patrol, or vice versa, and committing his crimes under cover of the ensuing argument. The Dockside watch commander, Gaamev Iyazm, a burly ork of House Zanzan with his jet-black hair oiled into braids in the troll style, can frequently be found at Tuf's Tavern on Marac between Strad and Cyric, a neutral ground between the watch and the patrol, arguing with Harbormaster Pralytrarp over the latest clash between their respective forces. That the two dislike each other is well known, as is the fact that they will swiftly put aside their differences in the face of a major threat to their area of the city.



## Regarding the Military

As mentioned previously, the Theran military has a large base just north of the city, to guard the trade artery that passes through Galedon to the Golden Isle. Most of the Zanzan presence in the region is found here, rather than in the city proper, although as discussed under the topic of the watch some of its officers are of this House. The contingent at Syurelith Fortress is sufficient to repel most attempts to interrupt the flow of trade, and for that matter to halt all but the most intensive armed incursions.

While most of the units stationed at the Facility are regular troops of the Sword of the Golden Isle, one is a local innovation that thankfully remains an experiment. The Furies are an elite troop composed of adolescent slave girls, mostly of the human and ork races, enspelled for ferocity, speed, and toughness, given weapons suitable for Vorst and used as shock troops.

*“Does efficiency make a weapon evil? I think not. The way it is wielded can be evil. Its owner can be evil. But a weapon is*

*simply a weapon.”*

-- Threndok, guard to Tarliman Joppos

Whatever indoctrination these poor souls are put through completely erases their compassion and individuality, leaving them savage killing machines, more like a pack of blood monkeys than anything resembling a Name-giver. Worse, the blood magics worked upon them take a fearful toll. After approximately three years, they die, burned out by the terrific strain. With their heads shaven, their unit insignia (a winged dagger enshrouded in flames) tattooed on the right side of their scalps and their leather armor dyed blood red, they present a fearsome appearance, the more so because they sing going into battle. The sound of their high, clear voices chanting a martial anthem is enough to send anyone who has ever seen them previously running in stark terror. Whatever nethermancer conceived of such a twisted plan, to turn the flower of youth into such a destructive force, must certainly be in league with a Horror and cursed by Garlen.

## Notable Governing Personalities

### Governor Miklos

A slender, dark-skinned and dark-haired human of House Thaloss, Miklos rose from undergovernor to his current position after the previous Governor, Reder, a Medari elf of well-known carnal appetites, was found to have embezzled large sums of money from the city funds to pay for visits to discreet establishments in the White. Reder protested his innocence all the way to the executioner's block, to no avail. The records were far too clear. Miklos, who had assisted in the investigation from the start, was named to replace his former superior in the post, his past performance being notable for its lack of notability.

Miklos is a conservative, thoughtful man who dislikes large risks. He plans in the long view, laying the foundation in his first year for events that would not come to fruition until his old age. The chief complaint against him by the nobility is that he is boring. Apparently, he would rather review the city account books than attend the endless stream of social functions in the White. While he dislikes parties, though, he has made himself accessible for smaller social engagements, and hosts a weekly luncheon for the heads of the noble Houses and their retinues at his residence. Only the poor can complain of not having his ear, but then the poor only gain the attention of those in



power when they become a problem.

On the other hand, the military is staunchly behind him. Since he took office, Miklos has increased appropriations for the city's defenses, allowing the construction of new breastworks, retaining walls, blockhouses and gates to better control access to the Caldera and the city proper. Pay for the soldiers has never been so much as a day late, and combat bonuses have been available for anyone wishing to volunteer for the patrols that sweep the region around the city, keeping the roads clear of bandits and hostile creatures.

### **Harbormaster Sedm Pralytrarp**

A t'skrang of Carinci descent, Sedm is only a step or two removed from the lahala of her niall. Her skin is deep emerald, with bright blue down her neck and across her hands, and her crest is tinged with orange along the spines. Like all t'skrang, she loves bright colors and sparkly things, so dresses in the most vivid silks she can find. Her crest carries a series of gold rings through it that chime softly against each other when it rises and falls. Only when she intends to be in the water is she without at least three necklaces, a brooch or two, and a jeweled swordbelt carrying a gold-hilted rapier. Around her at all times is a contingent of the Harbor Watch, chosen for their attractiveness as well as their skill with weapons. Image is important to Sedm. The Harbormaster must present herself as well-off, to give the city an air of strength and prosperity.

Sedm certainly carries herself with an air far more grand than the usual t'skrang exuberance. Every document she signs is of the utmost importance, every permit she grants is a personal favor. She demonstrates her power and the wealth of the city in the expansiveness of her actions, for only someone of high standing and great riches could possibly hand out such largess. On the other hand, once offended, she is slow to forgive, and can put on such an air of high disdain that the person at fault is reduced to

the status of an insect.

Stories are still told of the captain of a merchant vessel who, angry over being held out in the bay while another ship docked, expressed his opinion of the harbormaster too fervently when she passed by later that day. For weeks, his vessel suffered her wrath, unable to find enough longshoremen to unload it in time to make the next tide, given slip assignments at the far south end of the docks by the swamps, and at one point couldn't get a pilot for three days, while the cargo of fruit rotted in the holds. Finally, the captain presented the harbormaster with a new set of robes of office, made of the finest, brightest silks and embroidered with spun gold and silver wire. On his very next voyage, a pilot met his ship as it came into the bay, and guided the vessel to a slip at the center of the docks, where a team of longshoremen stood waiting to take his cargo straight to the warehouses.

### **Senior Arbiter Mieqalia Tzoic**

A gracious, elegant elven woman of House Qelirc, Mieqalia's dignified demeanor puts people off balance who expect a tough-as-nails veteran of the Theran legal system. Do not be fooled by her outgoing social attitude. She knows the law down to the last period in the last sentence, the oldest precedent and the most recent decisions. Every detail of House genealogy is recorded in her private references, locked up in her offices at the Spire of Rule, as House affiliation frequently has great bearing on legal disputes and criminal proceedings. Mieqalia simply does not believe that an arbiter must be harsh and remote. Far from it -- a reputation for gentle social bearing will go far in getting honest responses to questioning. For those who do not respond to calm probing over a cup of tea, there are always the ghareez.

The one thorny issue in her administration has been the licensing of magicians. Her House is predominant in magical circles, providing many of the elementalists who keep the Caldera stable and livable. A large



percentage of the elementalists on the faculty of the Messianas School are also of House Qelirc, as are many members of the Board of Magicians. As such, her House holds a near monopoly on magic in the city. All magicians wishing to practice in Galedon must be licensed, which means they must pass the examination of the Licensing Board. Disputes over licensing examinations often include accusations of favoritism, with fingers being leveled at House Qelirc. Non-elementalists also raise disputes over the Board's reluctance to license illusionists and nethermancers, and the influence of the elementalists of Qelirc in that regard. These disputes must be resolved through the office of the Arbiter, placing Mieqalia in a precarious situation, caught between the concerns of her House and the duties of her office. Thus far, she has ruled fairly enough to keep formal charges of favoritism from being leveled against her. On the other hand, the stickier problems seem to resolve themselves, with complaints being withdrawn and settled privately, or the complainants seeking their fortunes elsewhere.

### **Administrator of Taxation Rya Fenniden**

Of House Medari, Rya performs his duties as the head of the tax office extremely well. This has not earned him any friends, with the possible exception of the governor. Punctilious, exacting, humorless, tyrannical to his staff and overbearing at best to the general populace, Rya is the sort of man who will redo your sums three times, even if it takes him all day and into the night, if he believes you're off so much as a copper.

A tall human, lean to the point of cadaverous, the best word to describe Rya is grey. His hair is grey, his clothes are grey, his manner is grey. He is married and has three children, a fact which utterly amazes me, although I am quite certain that his children would not recognize their father on the street, as much time as he spends in his office. Very few people have any influence

with him at all. Certainly, his House elders would prefer that he listen to them, but how much he does so is obvious by the taxes levied against Medari -- not a copper less than any other House. The governor of course has his ear, but over the years Rya has proven to be a most obstinate man. His chief priority is making sure that every coin owed to the city treasury is collected, recorded and properly handled, and all else must fall to the wayside before that. It is well known that Rya assisted Miklos in exposing Reder's crimes, not out of friendship or a sense of duty to the Empire or moral outrage, but simply because he was annoyed over the city's books failing to balance.

His wife, Thafi, spends most of her time on the arts, attending exhibitions, poetry readings, and the like, and entertaining the occasional artist whom she finds more amusing than her husband. Every bit as vivacious as he is bland, her marriage to him was arranged for political reasons. She dresses colorfully enough, although not as well as she would like, having to account to her husband for every silver spent, and having to stay carefully within the bounds of the budget he sets out for her. Thus, her robes tend to be a season or two out of style, unless her current favorite is enjoying a run of success in his artistic pursuits and decides to indulge her in a bit of largesse.

### **General Dorn Halbjargen**

One of the largest Name-givers I have ever seen, General Halbjargen is a troll of Vasgothian stock, and still affects the furs and leathers of his parents' native land when off-duty. As commander of the military base north of the city, the general has charge of the largest standing Theran military force in the region. Halbjargen was born on Thera itself, the first son of troll warriors adopted into House Zanzan for their prowess in battle. He showed an aptitude for command at a young age, and rose swiftly within the ranks. His massive frame, half a head taller than any sky raider, leads people to underestimate his mind, a fatal tactical error for many. While it is true that the general could wrestle



a thundra beast to a standstill, he can also defeat the cleverest opponent at tabletop warfare, in any board game or battle simulation devised.

Halbjargen won the loyalty of his troops early in his current command by leading a charge against an invading force of bandits from the rocky lands to the east, sending bodies high into the air with each sweep of the double-bladed stave he favors. He has

never asked any person under his command to take on a task he would not do himself, a fact that he takes great pride in and that anchors his reputation for fair-minded leadership. Rumor has it that his unbending honor has made a few enemies within the city. Not everyone, especially in a place as rife with intrigue as Galedon, appreciates an honorable man.



## CONCERNING THE NOBLE HOUSES

While travelers in the Thera Empire should already be conversant with the Names and principal interests of the predominant noble Houses, local variation makes discussion of them necessary. Also, only five Houses are represented in Vivane, which may lead Barsaivians to believe that these are the only ones that matter. Far from it; those Houses are simply the only ones with interests in what Thera considers a remote outpost on the edge of the Empire. Galedon has representatives of those five, plus three more of marked importance and many of lesser.

I have realized that one reason why so many Therans in Vivane make a bad impression is that only the most opportunistic or desperate go there deliberately, to seek their fortunes in uncharted territory. Others are sent there because they have grievously offended someone in power, and once in Vivane have nothing to lose by continuing to be offensive. Thus, Vivane quite probably represents the worst of the Empire's citizens, because of its location and situation. Galedon, on the other hand, is a vital trading port near the heart of the Empire, and attracts the best and brightest that Thera has to offer. Its culture is old and well-established, in an urban setting with all of the necessities of urbane life immediately available, while in Vivane the few luxuries must be imported at great cost and effort. The contrast is striking, and going from one to the other may very well be in part what has improved my view of Therans as a people.

### Carinci

With a strong t'skrang majority, the House of Carinci quite naturally has heavy investments in shipping. The harbormaster is of this House, giving them a great advantage on the docks. Carinci holds the contracts for road and dock maintenance in Dockside, and has charge of the harbor patrol. House Zanzan has been trying to gain control of the harbor patrol for decades, but with Carinci being so firmly entrenched, and so many of the harbor patrol officers being either of Carinci or its cadet branches, thus far Zanzan's efforts have failed. Governor Miklos is known to be well satisfied with Carinci administration of the patrol, so as long as

there are no incidents which require his intervention, the situation is unlikely to change.

### Ensarceg

The oldest and most mortal enemy of the Naseyn, House Ensarceg makes its fortune managing land. Landowners, landlords, and farmholders, Ensarceg is content to collect the rent on its property and let others take the harder route of making a profit from residing thereon. Heavily invested in clothing and textiles, Ensarceg operates the city's primary tanning works, and has members involved in weaving, dying and tailoring, as well as farming of textile fibers and dye



herbs. Styles for the nobility are set by Ensarceg, whose designers have the ears of all the well-dressed Galedonians. From year to year, subtle changes are worked on the themes, allowing the wealthy who can afford new robes at every turn of the season to sneer at the less fortunate, who must make do with the previous year's garb, and allowing House Ensarceg to spin fibers into gold as their tailors fill the House coffers.

A recent epidemic of brown smut in the cotton fields put the House in danger, and nearly at the throats of the Naseyn, whom they blamed for introducing the disease to the city with a cargo of contaminated fabrics brought in from the East. Fortunately, a Questor of Jaspre, an adept passing through the city on her way to the Eternal Library on the Golden Isle, was able to effect a cure and save much of the crop. If the adventurer had not happened along when she did, the two Houses might very well have resorted to the open shedding of blood.

### **Medari**

Not as strong in Galedon as in other cities, Medari nevertheless occupies key positions in society. Many of the tax collectors in Cliffside and Dockside are of House Medari. While Carinci sets the rates for duties on cargo brought into the city, and Narlanth does the paperwork, it is Medari who actually collects the silver. Medari holds the contracts for several basic municipal services, including maintenance of the supply and waste shafts in the Caldera. Primary supporters of the temple of Garlen, Medari never hesitates to mention that they care more for the health of the city's inhabitants than any other House whenever their detractors speak.

### **Narlanth**

As in Vivane, members of this House tend to study the more esoteric of the magical arts. Most of the nethermancers and several of the wizards on the faculty at the Messianas School are Narlanthi, a percentage reflected

in the professional magicians in the non-academic populace. Not all House members are adepts, however, some being on the faculty of the Imperial Collegium, others making their living as owners of copyist houses, accounting firms, and other bookish pursuits. As such, they're usually involved in any situation that involves numbers or paper, which most intrigues in the Caldera do. House Narlanth holds the maintenance contract for the Gardens of Tuleth, hiring laborers from Downslope and Highslope for the hard work. Skilled horticulturists within the House see to the health of the plants and the arrangement of the Gardens.

### **Naseyn**

As a founding House of the city, Naseyn was in an excellent position to acquire much of the arable land around Galedon during its initial construction. They now hold all of the primary contracts for food importation and farming for the city. This puts them in direct conflict with the Ensarceg, whom the Naseyn regard as latecomers and upstarts. It is said that while Medari collects the silver and Thaloss keeps the gold, it is Naseyn who holds the purse-strings, for beyond all other concerns people must eat.

From this position of power, Naseyn has obtained and held for centuries the contracts for the operation of lifts in the Cut, giving them control of cargoes brought into the Caldera. Naseyn also has its fingers in cartage and warehousing in Dockside and Cliffside, and owns Tonisitoa Shipping.

Naseyn's fortunes slipped during the Scourge, as most of their income derived from contact with the world outside the citadel, but the House leaders had hoarded their gold for decades and rode out the centuries with equanimity. When the citadel was opened, Naseyn's surveyors led the way out of the Caldera, planting marker stakes and flags on what would become once again the breadbasket of the city, measuring out the boundaries of their land by dead reckoning from the mouth of the Cut.



Members of the House are aggressive in business, but not foolhardy, and will always have another plan laid by in case the first turns unprofitable. Some say that Naseyn attempts to make up in gold what they lack in social status, having few members in governmental positions and in the academic world. Few say this within the hearing of members of the House. Given Naseyn's terrific financial clout, they could easily ruin any but the wealthiest and the most well-entrenched.

### **Qelirc**

A The most prominent House in magical circles, Qelirc dominates the faculty at the Messianas School, providing all but two of its elementalists. They also have the contract for Caldera stabilization, making sure that the walls do not slide down onto the Flat. Qelirc owns the Flame, mentioned under Lodging, which serves as a meeting place for elementalists and the like. The top arbiter in the city is of House Qelirc; the political situation this engenders is discussed in the section on Notable Personalities, under the heading On Government.

### **Thaloss**

As usual, this House is prominent in governmental matters. The Governor of the city is of House Thaloss, as are the senior priests at the temple of Dis. While Thaloss forms the greater part of the administration, however, Narlanth handles most of the actual work when numbers or paper are involved, requiring close cooperation between the two Houses to get anything done. When dealing with a bureaucrat, it is important to know whether the person is of Thaloss or Narlanth, which determines whether the person will determine policy or implementation.

Thaloss controls the undertakers guild, being responsible for disposal of the dead

throughout the city. The contracts for road maintenance in the Cut, the Caldera and the Dockway are held by Thaloss, which like all noble Houses supervises the work but hires laborers from the lower classes to actually perform it.

### **Zanjan**

As in most Theran cities, House Zanjan oversees the city guard. While the average watchman in the street is likely to be of the working class (although see my notes regarding the watchclans), the officers are for the most part Zanjan. With the watch on the side of the current governor, a change in holders of that office is unlikely. See the discussion of Governor Miklos for more detail.

The House is a strong political force due to the military base north of the city. The Empire decided long ago that a heavy military presence was necessary to guard the trade routes that gave Galedon its initial reason for existence. The base also provides a ready means of quelling large disturbances within the city. Within an hour, charioteers can be within the city limits, bringing archers and shock troops to deal with anything the watch cannot handle on their own.

Troops on liberty can be found in the city on most days. Nearby will almost always be a unit of the courtesy patrol, soldiers from another unit not currently on liberty present to make sure that their fellows do not embarrass the armed forces through severely inappropriate behavior, and to mediate in disputes between soldiers on liberty and residents of the city. The primary duty of the courtesy patrol is to remove soldiers from any unpleasant situation, not to deal with legal matters. Charges and damages must be appealed through the usual channels.





## ON THE RUMORS OF ASSASSINS

As noted previously, Galedon is a city where intrigue is a pastime, and where the citizens have elevated conspiracy to an art form. In such an environment, whispers of professional conspirators abound. People discuss in hushed tones the possibility of spy adepts, and even, in quieter whispers, of adepts of the art of assassination.

I am trusting in the predictions of the old fortune-seller, back in Anghali G'hosteren, at this point. She assured me that I would see Thera before I die. All of her other pronouncements have been well in the gold. Therefore, I feel that I can discuss what I have learned, and what I suspect, with a certain degree of impunity. If reprisals do occur, they will at least come after this document has reached the Hall of Records and made the matter public. I hope that in so doing, I may be able to discourage actions against me. The suspects would be obvious, should any ill befall me.

With these thoughts in mind, then, I present what I have been able to deduce. Please bear in mind that the following mixes conjecture and hard fact more freely than is usually permissible in a scholarly work. My research has been stymied at more than one crucial juncture. In order to present a coherent narrative, I have had to fill in a great many holes in the solid facts of the matter with rumors and outright guesswork. Whenever possible, I shall indicate what is known for a certainty, hopefully without compromising my sources, many of whom agreed to speak with me only after receiving assurances that my notes and the resultant article would be sent out of the Empire forthwith.

As I have said before, during the Scourge the people of Galedon elevated intrigue to a fine art. In the course of doing so, stories were told of clever plots, daring conspiracies and the downfall of individuals and Houses thought untouchable. These tales, repeated, grew in the telling, and reached the status of legends. Combined with similar pre-Scourge tales, a Pattern began to form. Eventually, as more and more Name-givers came to believe in the existence of assassin adepts, such adepts began to come into existence. This tangentially brings up an interesting prospect. Massed belief in something evil brought about the evil thing itself. If we could somehow convince enough people that Horrors do not exist, perhaps the world could at last be rid of them.

*What rubbish! One does not destroy a True Pattern by refusing to believe that it exists. Why, if one were to follow this argument through to its logical end, then one must come to the conclusion that the Horrors exist because of the Books of Harrow, and our belief in their warnings. I refuse to believe that we brought the Scourge down upon ourselves. Besides, has this fellow really thought through what he is proposing? It is far simpler to convince someone of the existence of a thing than to dissuade them of belief in the same thing. Try this as an experiment. For one candlemark, think of anything in the world except for a brithan. Go ahead, try it. I defy you to keep the brithan from your mind. The very effort of trying to avoid the idea brings it to the forefront of your thoughts. While Tarliman is a brilliant scholar in his field, he would do well to confine his remarks to city lore and leave the debate over Patterns where they belong - in the hands of the adepts of the Mind.*

-- Yevgeny Zamyatin, Wizard, City of Bethabel

At any rate, Galedon fostered a nest of asps in its bosom. For better or worse, it seems that not only assassin adepts, but an order dedicated to the study of that fell Discipline, had their origins here.



I have uncovered evidence of a secret society of assassins known to outsiders as the Green Coral, from the emblem they use for identification to potential clients. The name they use within their own ranks is unknown. Any discovering it, so the rumors say, must either join their ranks or die. According to the tales, Green Corals rarely commit an elimination themselves, working through multiple intermediaries who do not know the entire plan, advising clients on which dishes to lace, whose lips to paint with the final component. In a city of subtle maneuver, the Green Coral are the masters. Now, whether or not the Green Coral actually exist I cannot verify. However, every time a suspicious or fortuitous death occurs, rumors circulate that their assistance has been sought. I leave it to those who follow me to make up their own minds on the veracity of this information. I confess I have little interest in pursuing it any further myself.